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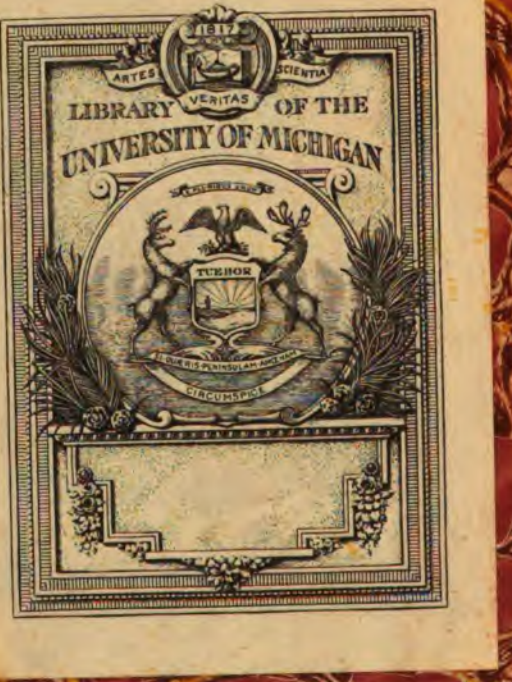
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TRAVELS
IN
CIRCASSIA,
KRIM-TARTARY, &c.

INCLUDING

A STEAM VOYAGE DOWN THE DANUBE, FROM VIENNA TO CONSTANTINOPLE, AND ROUND THE BLACK SEA.

By EDMUND SPENCER, Esq.
Author of "Travels in the Western Caucasus," &c.

A TURKISH FAMILY PICTURE.

Third Edition.
IN TWO VOLUMES.
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PREFACE.

THE events which have taken place within the last few months in Persia, Herat, and India, and their intimate connexion with Circassia, and the other Asiatic countries on the Black Sea, which recently formed the theatre of my wanderings, have induced me to submit to the public a cheap and revised edition of this work.

Connected as the conquest of Circassia confessedly is, however remotely, with the security of our Eastern empire, we cannot wonder at the increasing importance attached to it by men of every shade of political opinion, nor at the undisguised apprehension with which its possible consummation is regarded. During a long series of years has Russia unnoticed, unheeded by slumbering Europe, pursued step by step her

plans for the subjugation of the Caucasus; but now for the first time, through the instrumentality of the free press of England, a knowledge of the real state of that interesting country has been conveyed to the most remote corners of the globe.

The patriotic efforts of the brave mountaineers to defend their humble hearths from the grasp of the invader, and the unequal strife in which they have been so long engaged,* are appreciated as they deserve, and their cause has won the sympathy of every humane and enlightened man in every part of civilised Europe; for whether in Paris or Vienna, in Berlin, Naples, or Madrid, Circassia is the theme of discussion at every *conversazione;* the most fervent wishes are breathed for the ultimate success of her arms, while the oppressor who would destroy her is branded with every epithet that tyrannous cruelty deserves.

But will the expressed indignation of Europe avail to arrest ambition in its career? Will any demonstration of public opinion, however

* Last year terminated the twelfth campaign of the Russians against the mountaineers of the Caucasus! A population of sixty millions opposed to four! without any results being obtained to the invaders, save the erection of a few forts on the coasts of the Black Sea.

strong, turn aside a powerful government like Russia from pursuing a policy when interest counsels its continuance? We fear not. It must therefore be evident that the further encroachments of Russia on the territory of her neighbours must be met with more powerful weapons —force to force.

I am no advocate for war, but every man acquainted with the aggrandising policy of Russia must be aware that the time has arrived when it is imperative upon us to place a barrier against the further advances of a power that threatens to become a dangerous rival—a powerful enemy.

With respect to my travels through Krim-Tartary, and my voyage round the Black Sea, I was indebted to the courtesy of Count Worrenzow, at that time governor-general of New Russia. That excellent nobleman not only facilitated my excursions through the interior of the countries over which he exercised almost sovereign authority, but in the kindest manner invited me to accompany him on his coasting expeditions, thus affording me an opportunity of visiting the whole of the Russian ports and settlements on the coast of the Crimea, Circassia, and Mingrelia — countries which had been

hitherto, for the most part, sealed against the intrusion of a stranger.

The traveller who may adopt a steam-vessel as his mode of conveyance from Vienna to Constantinople, will find in the work a description of every object worthy of attention on his route. Constantinople and its environs are delineated with as much accuracy as a brief *séjour* would permit. The reader will also find various interesting particulars relative to Krim-Tartary, and traits of the customs, habits, and manners of the Nogay Tartars.

Being the first traveller who penetrated into the interior of Circassia, I have endeavoured to omit no fact that could tend to develope the features of that highly interesting country, or the character of its heroic inhabitants.

The illustrations for the work were sketched from nature, and the map of the Black Sea has been arranged after the most approved charts published by the Russian Admiralty. It will be found to contain some valuable additions, gleaned during my voyage and my excursions through the interior of the countries in its immediate vicinity.

The land occupied by the confederated princes of Circassia, marked as independent from the Kouban to the Salamache, or Burzuk-

lu river, on the frontiers of Mingrelia, corresponds with the boundaries laid down in the chart of General Khatov, published by order of the Russian government a few years previously to the Adrianople Treaty—an important admission when considered with reference to the question as to the right which Russia derives from Turkey to Circassia.

The position of the ports and settlements on the coast will be found perfectly accurate ; but as several have two names, Turkish and Russian, and often a third, Circassian; in order to avoid confusion, I have adopted that most generally known, and in such cases as were doubtful I have given two.

Even divested of any connexion with political events, the beautiful valleys and mountains of Circassia are in every respect calculated to attract the geologist, botanist, mineralogist, geographer, and the lover of nature.

In order to facilitate the traveller who may be desirous to visit the country, either for the purposes of commerce or science, I have added a brief vocabulary of the Circassian and Tartar language. The latter he will find very useful, as many of the Circassian chieftains are not only acquainted with it, but we everywhere, throughout the whole of these provinces, meet

with Krim and Nogay Tartars domiciliated, who, on the subjugation of their country to the rule of Russia, fled into the Caucasus.

Before I conclude my observations to the traveller who may journey in the East, I would recommend him to be on his guard against the climate, the pernicious effect of which has been too fatally proved on European constitutions. Still, it must be admitted that many persons fall victims to their own imprudence, rather than to disease: for although dysentery, ophthalmia, the common intermittent fever, bilious intermittent, &c., prevails in some of the provinces on the Black Sea, originating in the rank vegetation, jungles, marshes, and saline incrustations; no danger is to be apprehended, provided that the traveller conforms, as much as circumstances will permit, to the habits of the natives, and takes care not to expose himself to the damp chills of the evening after the great heat of the day.

The traveller *en route* must be more than usually abstemious, and what he eats should be of the plainest kind. Wine and spirituous liquors should be studiously avoided, and, for the most part, animal food: for let it be remembered, that the amount of nourishment which is moderation in a cold climate may be

intemperance in a hot one. It is true, fatigue, and long exposure to the sun, notwithstanding every precaution, will enervate the frame, and predispose it to disease; but the traveller must not yield either to despondency or irritability, and, I repeat, he should particularly refrain from having recourse to the bottle to excite momentary cheerfulness. If, however, he is so unfortunate as to be attacked by indisposition, every dangerous symptom may generally be removed in a single night by adopting the most simple method of treatment, respecting which, Johnson's admirable work on Climates contains every information the traveller can desire; and none should leave home without it.

In fact, every man who visits the East should in some degree be acquainted with the curative art, particularly the use of the lancet: it is also advisable that he should carry with him a supply of medicine, which he will find not only useful to himself, but his character of a skilful *hakkim* will elevate him in the estimation of the people, and be the surest passport to their goodwill. In Circassia, the knowledge of medicine is considered not as the result of study, but the gift of heaven, and the being to whom it is vouchsafed, a holy man—to injure whom would be sacrilege.

The traveller who may be disposed to journey through the mountainous districts of Circassia, must bear in mind that there is not the slightest chance of obtaining any of the comforts of civilised life; and unless he can dispense with them, he had better stay at home; for, unlike Europe and many parts of the East, where a well-filled purse procures every accommodation, here he may be thankful if he obtains the shelter of a house. This does not originate in any want of hospitality in the inhabitants, but in the scantiness of the population, the absence of roads, and of places appropriated to public refreshment. He should therefore be provided with several little necessaries; such as a tent, carpet for a bed, a casserole for cooking, bags of meal for making cakes, leathern bottles for holding his beverage, together with a machine for making coffee, which will refresh him when weary and enliven him when dull, and is indeed invaluable to a traveller in the East. It is also indispensable that he should be furnished with an introduction to some chieftain or elder of the country, who by becoming his *konak* will be answerable to his countrymen for the good conduct of the stranger, and that he is not a Russian spy. Without this precaution, the traveller, after escaping the Russian cruisers,

would find that he had to contend against another danger—the united hostility of the whole population of Circassia, and he might consider himself fortunate if no worse punishment was decreed him for his temerity than being sold as a slave.

This severe mode of proceeding has been adopted of late years by the confederated princes of Circassia towards every stranger, of whatever nation or creed, in consequence of the number of Russian spies who were accustomed to enter the country in disguise.

E. S.

London, May, 1839.

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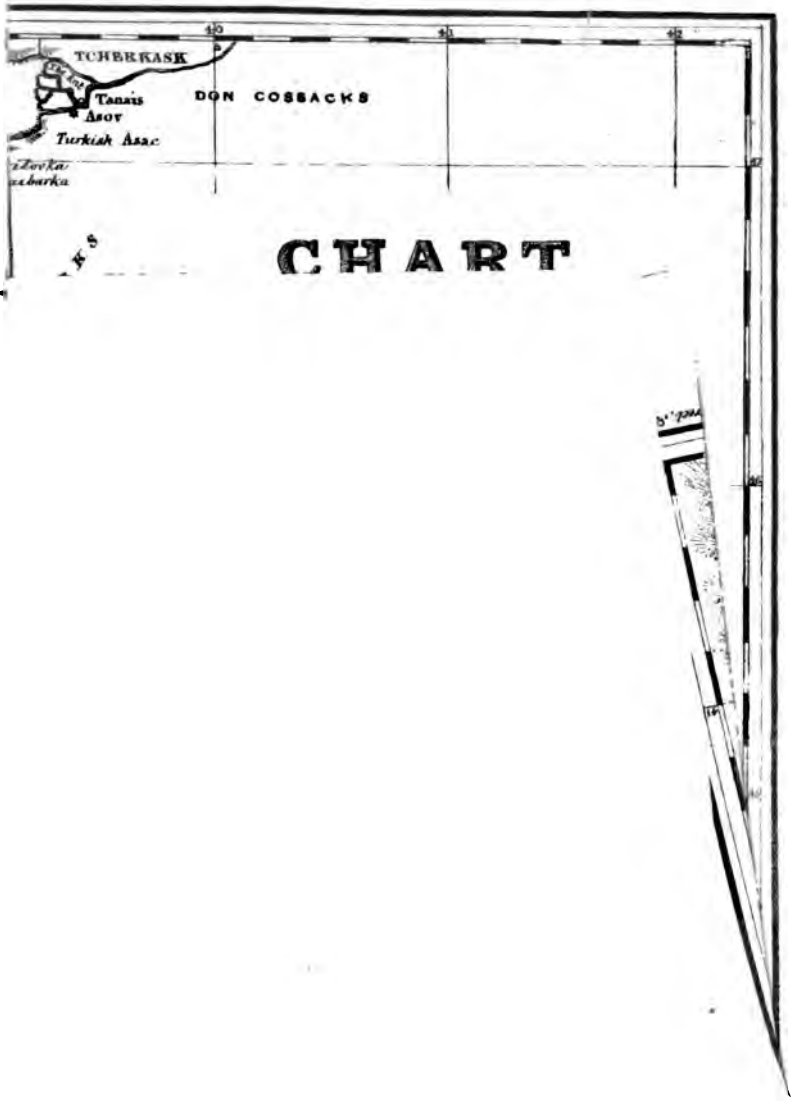
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PRESBURG.

LETTER I.

STEAM-PACKET FROM VIENNA TO PEST — PASSENGERS — CAPTAIN — SCENERY ON THE DANUBE — PLEASURES OF TRAVELLING BY STEAM — ARRIVAL AT PRESBURG.

Presburg, April 5th, 1836.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I am sure you will agree with me in thinking, that among the various modern discoveries which have had their origin in British genius, none is fraught with more important consequences to the welfare of mankind than the steam engine, none since the invention of printing more likely, ay, more certain, to prove the means of diffusing knowledge and civilisation,

over those regions of the globe, where ignorance and fanaticism chain down the intellect of man.

Whatever direction the tide of improvement may ultimately take, its first course appears to be towards those lands watered by the Danube, the Euxine, and the Bosphorus. Here we already behold some of the fairest countries of our hemisphere called into a new state of existence, and attracting the attention of the whole commercial and political world. These are the countries I am now about to explore,—countries rendered, at present, so peculiarly interesting by the novel position in which the events of the last few years have placed them; and I only hope I may be able to contribute, if not to your extensive fund of information and geographical knowledge, at least in some degree to your amusement.

We have certainly to thank that industrious traveller, Mr. Quin, for much information respecting the steam navigation of the Danube. He happened however, unfortunately, to journey down the river at a time when the works for improving its navigation were in their infancy, and in the autumn of a peculiarly dry season. Hence he experienced many difficulties in the prosecution of his voyage, owing to a deficiency of water and other obstructions. Besides, his tour only extended from Presburg to

Wallachia : thus the whole of the Lower Danube to the Black Sea remained a blank, so far as regarded its navigation by steam. Fate, however, favoured me with a happier combination of circumstances. I arrived at Vienna early in the spring, when the Danube was swollen by the melting of the snow on the mountains, which induced the directors of the steam navigation to send their first boat, the *Nador*, direct from Vienna ; for the river, after leaving that city, is so shallow during the summer, that no vessel, even of moderate burden, can come higher than Presburg. This inconvenience, I understand, will soon be remedied, as works are in progress for deepening the bed of the river ; and a canal is now excavating, intended to unite Vienna with the great navigable arm of the Danube, distant about a league.

A less attractive object would have sufficed to draw crowds of the wonder loving population of this gay metropolis ; but so novel an occurrence as the departure of the first steam-boat from Vienna set half its inhabitants in motion, and so early as four in the morning I found the road crowded with carriages, equestrians, and pedestrians. When our little vessel dashed gaily forward, the aspect of thousands of spectators, cheering us with loud *vivats*, not only presented

a very animated picture, but gave a hope that the enterprise would ultimately prove a profitable speculation to the company.

There could not have been less than from two to three hundred persons on board: the arrangements for general accommodation, I thought, were not so good as those in the Rhenish steam-vessels, and some of the passengers objected to the high charges for refreshment; and when we take into account the low price of provisions in this part of the continent, perhaps they did not complain without reason: still, to balance this, the fares were moderate, that in the chief cabin being no more than twelve florins from Vienna to Pest,—about a pound sterling.

The national characteristics of our party were not, as you might have expected, either striking, interesting, or novel; indeed I observed but little difference in their manners, customs, and costume, from those of our countrymen on board a Thames steamer; and assuredly, if this Augustan age should continue a few years longer, and the facilities for travelling go on increasing, the distinctive national features of the different European races will be obliterated altogether, and we shall appear as if belonging to the same family.

The majority of our passengers consisted of

belles and beaux from Vienna, who had come on a voyage of experiment as to the pleasure of travelling by steam, which they soon found to be sadly chastised by fear. On learning, however, that two Englishmen were on board, (what steam-boat in any part of the globe is without them?) apprehension overcame timidity, and several of the fair ones came in groups to demand of Mr. Newton and myself, if any probability existed of an explosion; evidently taking it for granted, that a Briton possessed some intuitive faculty of descrying at a distance any peril that might threaten a steam-boat. When we assured them no danger existed, save in their own imagination, it was apparently regarded as nothing less than the response of an oracle.

We had also several Hungarians on their way to the races at Pest, which were to commence in a few days. The physical line of demarcation between them and the Austrians rendered it impossible to doubt their identity, even for a moment; the Asiatic blood of the one showed itself in their fiery eyes, dark hair, light elastic forms, and restless demeanour; while the quiet, pale, blonde Austrian appeared good-nature and content personified. In the inhabitants of the second cabin I found far more variety and nationality than among their aristocratic neighbours.

Here were encamped, around pyramids of band-boxes, motley tribes of Tyroleans, Styrians, Moravians, and Bohemians, together with Poles and Jewish traders, on their way to the fair at Pest; intermingled with dandy shopmen and smart grisettes from the elegant metropolis of Austria, who evidently regarded themselves with as much self-complacency as they bestowed contempt upon the gaudy dresses and vulgar tournure of their provincial fellow-travellers.

After being accustomed to the costume of our own tars, you will be amused to learn that of the Hungarian captain of our steamer. His diminutive figure, for he could not have been more than five feet in height, was attired in a hussar jacket, richly braided; and as if this were not sin enough against marine manners, his round rosy face was ornamented with a tremendous pair of mustachios fiercely curled, and large whiskers growing under his chin like a lady's boa; and these, being of a fiery red, contributed to give a most grotesque expression to his countenance. The engineer, an intelligent young man, a native of Mayence, had resided several years in England. He surprised me with the information that wood was the fuel he usually burnt; for, notwithstanding plenty of coal is found in most of the comitats of Hungary, and even in the vicinity of the Danube,

yet such is the want of enterprise in the people of this country, that Newcastle is found a cheaper market for supplying the steam-vessels on the Danube with coals, than Hungary itself, where labour and provisions may be obtained at the lowest possible cost.

So long as we continued within the Duchy of Austria, the banks of the river remained low and swampy, without a single object to relieve the monotony of the landscape, except a distant prospect of the Kahlenberg and Hungarian hills. On passing the island of Lobau, our attention was directed for a moment to that dreary spot, so connected with interesting historical recollections. It told of the conquests of Napoleon, of the humiliation of the Austrian empire. However, we were not doomed to linger long in this tiresome, uninteresting part of the Danube; for, moving rapidly onward, aided by the force of a strong current and an engine of forty-two horse power, we soon approached the Hungarian frontier, when the banks began to assume a more picturesque character. Ruined castles, dilapidated fortifications, neat towns, and pretty villages, added to vine-clad hills, rich corn-fields, and blooming gardens, formed a succession of pleasing pictures, which continued to cheer us without intermission to Presburg.

We were first gratified with a hasty glance of Petronell, the Carnuntum of the Romans; which still exhibits the remains of the triumphal arch erected by Augustus to the honour of Tiberius, conqueror of Pannonia: we also obtained a glimpse of the famous fortified wall which runs from hence to the great Hungarian lake, Neusiedlersee. This gigantic work is supposed to have been originally constructed by the Germans, as a defence against the devastation of the Huns, Tartars, and other Asiatic tribes; and though now a mere ruin, yet, at no more remote a period than a few centuries since, it rendered good service to Austria as a check against the invading Turks.

Surely no mode of travelling is half so agreeable as a steam-boat on a lake or river; you are neither tormented with dust, nor the numerous *désagrémens* of hotels, rapacious landlords, long bills, officious waiters, post-horses not ready, and grumbling postilions; each sufficient of itself to exhaust the patience of a traveller. On the contrary, here our expenses may be regulated with exact precision, and as we glide rapidly forward, there is just sufficient time to admire the scenery as in a panorama, while the distance veils its imperfections. The humblest village, with its tiny church, appears the very abode of content and happiness; and should the landscape become mo-

notonous, or the weather unfavourable, we are almost certain to find in the cabin good society, or at least some traits in the manners and character of the passengers, sufficient to prevent the approach of ennui.

But, to descend from general observations to those suggested by the locality, the tour of the Danube should be made in spring, for then we are not tormented with stinging musquitoes, or a burning sun. Nature is also dressed in her brightest smiles, and, as she now appeared, I could not too much admire the delicately rich verdure of the pastures and meadows, nor the gardens and orchards, clothed in all their varied flowery tints, resembling so many bouquets; while the young corn, here waving in the wind, there bursting from its earthly prison in all the strength and vigour of renewed life, gave an additional charm to the beautiful landscape.

One of the most interesting pictures presented to us was Deutsch-Altenburg, with its fine modern castle and pretty church, situated on the summit of a hill; and I much regretted that we passed so rapidly, as not to permit me taking a sketch of Haimburg, beautifully grouped round the base of a mountain, crowned by a picturesque ruin: and should any of our clever painters journey to the Danube in search of a landscape to adorn one of

our pretty annuals, I would by all means counsel Haimburg, with Theben (Dowina) on the opposite bank, should form the subject of his pencil, combining as they do all that can be called picturesque in the mouldering ruin, the disrupted fortification, and the most lovely river scenery. Theben, now so solitary and insignificant, was at one time a town of great importance, being mentioned in the history of the German wars so early as the seventh century; and to judge from the extent and strength of the fortifications, the altitude of the hill, and commanding position, it must have been a most formidable military position.

We remained about half an hour at Presburg, sufficiently long to allow me to take a sketch of the town, with the royal castle of the kings of Hungary proudly seated on the last peak of the lower chain of the Carpathians. However interesting and picturesque Presburg may appear from the steam-boat, it does not improve upon a more intimate acquaintance, particularly when we remember it was the capital of so extensive a kingdom as Hungary: the streets, besides being narrow, are badly built and ill paved, and, with the exception of a few good inns, there is not the slightest appearance of improvement or commercial activity. The splendid castle is deserted and fast

falling to decay, and many of the wealthy nobles, who resided here when it was the capital, have removed to Vienna or Pest, leaving their spacious palaces without tenants, the numerous windows of which being broken, and covered with dust and cobwebs, contribute not a little to the desolation of the picture. The sittings of the Diet are still held here, and the brows of the Emperor of Austria here wreathed with the diadem of Hungary, a ceremony I had the pleasure of witnessing some years since. In conformity with the ancient institutions of the country, the newly-crowned monarch is obliged to ascend the Königsberg (king's mountain) on horseback, armed with the sword of King Stephen, the saint and patron of Hungary, when he extends it towards the four quarters of the globe; at the same time swearing, by the holy saint, to protect his subjects from their foes, on whatever side they may be assailed, and also to maintain intact their constitution, laws, and religion.

Farewell!

LETTER II.

ISLAND OF CZALLOKOZ—HUNGARIAN PEASANTS—COMORN—BEAUTIFUL SCENERY—GRAN—FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF PEST—HOTEL—COUNT SZECHENYI—NATIONAL MUSEUM—IMPROVEMENTS IN THE TOWN—ENVIRONS.

A SHORT distance after leaving Presburg, the Danube divides into two great arms, and forms the island of Czallokoz, twenty-four leagues in length, and fourteen in breadth. It is considered very fertile; and the multitude of villages scattered over it, with the agricultural fields and numerous flocks and herds, impart to the landscape a very pleasing effect. Still, as the whole surface is flat, the monotony of the scenery would not be sufficiently relieved, were it not occasionally broken by the endless water-mills, together with the heavily-laden boats drawn against the stream by fifty or sixty horses; and these, being driven by some of the wildest-looking human beings in Europe, form one of the most novel features on the Danube. The Hungarian peasant, it is true, advances many and strong claims to originality of costume, yet in this respect he is

entirely eclipsed by the Danube boatmen, whose attire consists of trousers as wide as petticoats, coarse hemp tunics, and monstrous broad-brimmed hats; while their legs and feet are left exposed alike to the burning sun and the rudest blasts of heaven. But it is the wild expression of their swarthy, weather-beaten countenances, aided by a profusion of sable hair streaming over their shoulders, and the loud howling chorus with which they cheer their horses, that imparts to them an appearance so savage, that you might deem yourself transported a thousand miles from civilised Europe.

Leaving Raab to the right, we soon after passed Comorn, the principal town of a comitat, still strongly fortified, and justly entitled to the epithet of the "maiden fortress;" for, during the whole of the wars and invasions to which Hungary was exposed, it was never captured. Here the two great arms of the Danube unite, and, being increased by the accession of the deep waters of the Waag, form a superb stream, which hurried us on with great velocity till we arrived at Gran—a very considerable town, and capital of a comitat. The noble edifice now erecting on a rock overhanging the town is intended to be the residence of the archbishop, primate of Hungary, one of

the wealthiest and most influential magnats in the kingdom.

The scenery now exhibited on the banks of the Danube was superior in grandeur to any I had seen since leaving Vienna; mountains of porphyry rose up on either side, adorned with ruined castles and convents; and as our river had become swelled by the waters of the Gran, its already contracted channel seemed scarcely sufficient to contain the foaming tide: there was the fine old town of Wissegrad, with its many towers and spires rearing their stately forms among the clustering vines on the hills; while elevated on a lofty peak proudly rose, in all the splendour of decayed magnificence, the royal residence of the kings of Hungary. Then, after passing a succession of amphitheatres, formed by the windings of this most serpentine of rivers, a few inconsiderable towns and villages, and a perfect city of water-mills, we cast anchor at Pest, having completed our journey in fifteen hours.

As my Hungarian friends at Vienna had been most eloquent in praise of the beauty of the towns of Buda and Pest, they had become in some degree familiar to my imagination; and I candidly confess, after making a few deductions on the score of national vanity, the first *coup d'œil* fully

answered my expectations. On one side you have a most imposing view of the fine old city of Buda, swept by the vast stream which here, somewhat impeded in its progress by a majestic curve, swells into a foaming surge. From its banks the proud city gradually ascends the lofty mountain amidst the varied foliage of terraced gardens; the whole crowned by the citadel and the splendid palace of the Palatinate, which increase, in no inconsiderable degree, the loveliness of the surrounding landscape.

Pest, on the opposite bank, has not the advantage of a commanding situation, being built on a plain; yet, when viewed in detail, it is an infinitely more beautiful town, and the public and private edifices are of a superior class. This is principally owing to the patriotic feeling which has lately prompted the Hungarian magnats to embellish their own capital instead of the imperial Vienna; and while rambling through the interior of the town, or along the banks of the Danube, we are constantly reminded, by the frequent occurrence of fine modern buildings, of the wealth and taste of the inhabitants.

Should this laudable spirit of improvement continue, it is not improbable that Pest and Buda, which we may consider as one town, will ere long eclipse Vienna: the climate is more salubrious,

the situation far superior in a commercial point of view, and, now that steam navigation is established, it has every prospect of becoming a flourishing port. Add to which, it is the metropolis of a kingdom, with a rich patriotic nobility, a population of nearly* fourteen millions, and a soil unequalled in Europe for fertility. In short, this fine country is now commencing a new epoch, having been hitherto kept back by the unnatural rule of a stepmother; but steam navigation has given her an accession of strength and vigour, that bids fair to place her in a short time at a high point in the scale of European civilisation.

I put up my pilgrim's staff at the Jäger-horn, (hunter's horn,) the largest, most convenient, and, I may add, magnificent-looking hotel in Hungary, whose gigantic porter in his rich livery, cocked-hat, and golden-headed cane, as he promenaded beneath the lofty portal, appeared a fit appendage to such an establishment. The general appointments of the house were also in keeping with its exterior; among these we may reckon a serenade the live-long day by an excellent

* Count Nagy, well known as the author of several valuable literary works on Hungary, assured me that this country, together with Transylvania, and the space included in the military cordon on the Turkish frontier, contained the population I have specified.

band of music, and the traveller who has once dined upon the well-cooked viands of the Parisian *cuisinier*, will not fail to revisit the Jäger-horn. However, in consequence of arriving during the season of the races and the great spring fair, the apartments bore a high premium; and, in truth, it was almost as difficult to obtain a quartier among the high-born magnats, as to procure a ticket from the high-bred patronesses of Almack's.

I was fortunate in meeting at Pest with several friends, particularly the Count Etienne Széchényi, the distinguished patrician to whose patriotic exertions Hungary is so deeply indebted. The traveller has to thank his unwearied perseverance for the facility of steam navigation on the Danube, and his country owes to him a variety of institutions, all tending to promote her regeneration. Agriculture, the arts, sciences, and industry, are encouraged by judiciously-bestowed premiums; this has had the effect, not only of bringing forward native talent, but promoting the culture of the indigenous productions of the soil,—the wines, flax, hemp, grain, tobacco, wool, tallow, &c., whose excellence has been hitherto nearly unknown, are now beginning to be appreciated by the commercial world, according to their real value.

The national museum, founded in 1802, owes

its origin to the patriotic exertions and munificent donations of another member of this public-spirited family, the Count Francis Széchényi; and whether we regard the splendour of the building, the rich collection of antiquities, medals, and armour, the rare specimens of minerals, or the numerous and well-selected library, with its interesting manuscripts, we shall not find this institution surpassed by any other of a similar nature in the Austrian empire, more especially as it is richly endowed with funds, which are applied to the purchase of such objects as are curious in nature, or interesting in art.

In order to give you some idea of the improvements in this town and the habits of the people, it is only necessary to say that, little more than half a century ago, Pest was composed in great part of mere huts, surrounded by high walls and stagnant moats, without lamps, pavement, or any other of the comforts of civilised life; for then the noble and the wealthy spent their time and riches, basking in the sunny smiles of court favour at Vienna. Whereas, we now see on the banks of the Danube a range of buildings, which would be admired for the beauty of their architecture even in the meridian of London or Paris. On the spot where a marsh once shed around its pestilential exhalations, we behold a

noble piazza, adorned, among other striking edifices, by the palaces of the rich magnats, Urmenyi, Festétics, &c. The high wall and fortifications have been also rased to the ground, and the space converted into a wide and well-kept road, which separates the town from its extensive faubourgs.

In addition to these improvements, there is the richly-endowed university with its beautiful hall, the town-house, the military hospital, the artillery barracks, several noble churches, the palaces of the nobility, and the new theatre with its *redout-saal* and coffee-house; all distinguished in a greater or less degree for their architecture. Pest and Buda are also liberally furnished with hospitals and benevolent institutions; among many others, there is the orphan-house, the citizen's hospital, and similar establishments for the Wallachians, Greeks, and Jews; besides charitable institutions, formed by a society of ladies, for the education of blind children, and the maintenance of blind adults.

The chain of hills that encircle Buda, and add so materially to the beauty of the landscape, are not only celebrated for the excellent quality of the wines they produce, but for the mineral baths, which here have their source, affording agreeable resorts to those who are seeking

amusement, and holding out the promise of relief to others who are searching after health. Thus you may easily imagine that Buda and Pest, with a united population of upwards of a hundred and five thousand, the former the seat of government, the latter the great mart of commerce, possessing all the advantages of good society and a fine climate, form altogether a delightful residence.

With respect to the antiquity of these towns, there are various contradictory accounts; the most generally believed is, that Buda was founded by a colony of Romans, who gave it the name of Acquineum; subsequently it became the seat of Attila and Arpad, and then bore the name of Etelvar till the year 1351, when it received the Hungarian name Buda-var. On perusing the historical records of the country, I find it very narrowly escaped the fate of all those that had the misfortune to fall beneath the sway of the Osmanlis, the capital, Buda, having continued in their hands from 1541 to 1686.

LETTER III.

SPRING FAIR AT PEST—MAGYARS—VARIOUS TRIBES OF HUNGARY—SINGULAR ASPECT OF THE PEOPLE—RACES—PUBLIC DINNER AT THE CASINO—SIMILARITY OF MANNERS BETWEEN THE HUNGARIAN MAGNATS AND THE ENGLISH—HUNGARIAN HOSPITALITY—PASSPORT.

As I happened to be at Pest during the great spring fair and the races, I was not only provided with ample materials for amusement, but an opportunity of seeing the motley population of natives and strangers, which are usually attracted on this and similar occasions; for, though the Magyars, who have given their name to Hungary, are the greatest landed proprietors, and hold the reins of government, yet they are inferior in numerical force to the Sclavonians, (or Totoks,) the original inhabitants. These are divided into at least half a dozen separate tribes, each speaking a different patois; and if to them we add the colonies of Germans, Wallachians, Greeks, Armenians, French, Italians, Jews, and Gipsies, speaking their own languages and retaining their

national manners, customs, and religion, we may term Hungary a miniature picture of Europe.

My first lounge was through the fair, which afforded as many groups for the painter as for the observer of life and manners: the Babel-like confusion of tongues was endless, and the costume and appearance of the motley tribes could not have been equalled in variety by any other fair in Europe, or even by the most entertaining maskers that ever trod the Piazza San Marco, or the Corso at Rome, because here each performed his natural character. The most prominent figures in the group were ever the proud Magyars, particularly those just arrived from the provinces. The dress of some of these noblemen was indeed singular, consisting of a tight sheep-skin coat, or mantle, the woolly side inwards; while the other was gaudily embroidered all over with the gayest flowers of the parterre, in coloured silk, among which the tulip was ever the most prominent. Those whose wealth permitted it, were to be seen habited in their half-military, half-civil costume; and you might in truth fancy, from their haughty demeanour, that you were beholding a feudal lord of our own country of the middle ages, as, mounted on their fiery steeds and armed with sword and pistols, they galloped through the parting multitude, upon whom, when the slight-

est interruption occurred, they glanced with scorn and contempt.

Among crowds of Jews, Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Tyrolians, Germans, Sclavonians, Italians, and Hungarian peasants, were groups of gipsies, their black matted locks shading their wild sun-burnt countenances, exhibiting their dancing dogs, bears, and monkeys, or playing a lively tune for the amusement of the surrounding multitude, these itinerants being the popular musicians of Hungary. In another part of the fair, mountebanks on elevated platforms were relating the exploits of the famous robber Schrubar in the great forest of Bakony; or the ravages committed by the dreadful monster, half-serpent, half-flying dragon, that lately rose out of the Balaton lake, together with the most veritable history of the re-appearance of the renowned Merman, who had inhabited, for the last two years, his own extensive domain, the Hansag marshes. All these astonishing marvels, besides hundreds of others, were listened to by the peasants, not only with attentive ears, but open mouths, and were illustrated by paintings as large as life, depicting the extraordinary wonders, executed in a style which set all imitation at defiance.

Bread, cakes, cheeses, vegetables, &c., were

heaped on high in the streets, with the owners of each separate pile squatted in the midst. The savoury odour of multiplied stalls of frying sausages attracted some gourmands; whilst others feasted on the lighter refreshments of pastry, which the accomplished *cuisiniers* were preparing for their gratification.

But the popular viand was evidently the crayfish, which all ranks, however otherwise engaged, were incessantly consuming; nor did they in this manifest any deficiency in *goût*, as the flavour of the little dainties was really excellent, and I have rarely seen them exceeded in size. Indeed, to thread the mazes of this great Hungarian fair, so as to obtain a view of its rarities, was an undertaking of no little difficulty, on account of the immense pyramids of wool, hides, tobacco, and other raw materials, which ever stood in the way; and as these articles were most tempting baits to the cupidity of the Jewish traders, they might constantly be seen making use of all their cajoling eloquence, while prevailing upon the artless peasant to dispose of his wares at a price little more than nominal; when, however, the case was reversed, and the gaudy merchandise of the Jew and Armenian traders induced the peasant to become a purchaser, the balance of trade was considerably against him.

But, perhaps, of all the various groups over which my eye wandered, none more strongly arrested my attention than the Saxon colonists: these were attired in the same costume in which their ancestors some centuries gone by had emigrated from their father-land, their blue eyes and heavy quiet countenances forming a striking contrast to the vivid glances of the half Asiatic people around them. Nor were their moral traits less distinctively defined; for the prudent German, well knowing he was in the society of some of the most accomplished pickpockets on the continent, wisely determined that they should not prey upon him, for he did not once remove his hand from his pocket; while his good woman never failed to keep watch behind, attended by her little ones, who, on the approach of the half-wild gipsy, timidly covered their flaxen heads in the many folds of mamma's cumbrous petticoat.

I would, above all things, recommend every traveller who may visit Pest during the spring fair, not to leave it without taking a morning's ramble through the town; he will then see thousands of men, women, and children, lying about the streets, beneath the piazzas, or in the numerous barks on the river, with no other covering save the canopy of heaven and their own sheepskin mantles: he will also, still more to his sur-

prise, behold them anointing their persons with lard, in order to protect themselves during the day from the effect of heat, and the bites of vermin and insects.

My first excursion in the environs was to the plain of Rakos, famous for being the spot on which the Hungarians, in their primitive state, were accustomed to hold their Diet under the free canopy of heaven; and now not less famous for being that on which the first races were celebrated in Hungary, under the auspices of Mr. Gordon, formerly our ambassador at Vienna.

These races, which are some of the best I have seen out of England, differ in nothing from those in it, except that, towards the conclusion, the peasants perform matches, encouraged by the society for promoting the breed of horses; and as they ride in their peculiar costume, and without saddles, the exhibition of at least a dozen such wild-looking jockeys is always productive of much mirth and fun, as it generally happens that more than half the riders are most unceremoniously hurled to the earth.

A vast concourse of people had assembled to witness them; and as the weather was exceedingly fine, I enjoyed not a little the novel spectacle of thousands of cavaliers galloping over the field; and I knew not how sufficiently to admire the

accomplished Hungarian equestrian, who, in his splendid hussar uniform, firm in the saddle, and light and elastic in action, seemed as if formed to guide the spirited animal that carried him; and so appropriate were they to each other, that the beauty of each appeared destroyed when separated. We had, besides, every species of vehicle, from the elegant barouche of the magnat, down to the primitive car of the peasants, not unlike in form to the *arabat* of the Nogay Tartars; and to describe the motley tribes of spectators, would only be to repeat what I have already said when giving you an account of the fair.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, we returned to Pest, when I was invited to a public dinner at the casino of nobles; where, if it had not been for the difference in the language, and the Asiatic countenances of the guests, I might have concluded I was at a public dinner in old England; the cooking, attendants, toasts, speeches, cheering, everything being completely in the English style. Indeed, of all the foreigners among whom I have mixed, there are none who assimilate themselves more closely to our national manners and customs than the Hungarian magnats, nor any who receive a Briton with more cordiality: our language is universally spoken, our literature is generally studied, and

I found our best publications in the library of the casino, and on the tables of every nobleman I visited.

The gentlemen who composed our present party were among the most influential, wealthy, and enlightened of the Hungarian patriots. Do not, however, let this word be understood in a political sense: I only mean that they have consecrated their best energies to the benefit and improvement of their country; and as you have resided some time in Vienna, and are well acquainted with the Hungarian people, I feel a pleasure in giving you the names of a few of the most distinguished. Besides the chairman, Count Etienne Széchényi, to whose patriotism I have already alluded, there was Count Louis Karolyi, the distinguished president of the Agricultural Society, several members of the noble families of the Esterhazys, the Festétics, the Nadasdys, the Hunyadys, &c., together with your friend, the talented young advocate M. Fasner, to whose kind attentions I have been deeply indebted.

On becoming a member of the casino, my author's vanity was not a little gratified at finding on the table of the reading-room my Sketches of Germany and the Germans; and as a few of my intimate friends were aware that to me belonged

the paternity of the unclaimed foundling, it proved the means of introducing me to several gentlemen, who rendered me every kindness that friendship and hospitality could dictate. But, perhaps, in nothing more did they evince this, than in the very liberal manner with which they provided me with facilities for making my projected tour through Hungary on my return from Constantinople. In order to estimate these courtesies at their full value, you must remember that the public conveniences for a traveller in this long-neglected country are "few, and far between." A hotel, even on the great road, is a rarity, and when you do find one, the accommodations are generally wretched; while the luckless traveller on the cross-roads, or in the remote provinces, must think himself fortunate when he can find a bed in a cottage, should he be unprovided with letters of recommendation. Then for a conveyance, he must for the most part be contented with his own good steed, who will carry him over mountains and fields whenever, which is very often the case, a road is not to be found.

My friends, anticipating these petty *désagrémens*, furnished me with a species of passport, which important little document invested me, *pro tem.*, with all the privileges of a Hungarian

magnat. Hence, whenever I presented it, every Magyar throughout Hungary and Transylvania was obliged, according to established conventional courtesy, to receive me as he would one of his own compatriots, and to provide me with every necessary accommodation, such as horses, refreshment, bed, &c. This instrument was written in the Hungarian language, which cannot claim the slightest affinity with any other now spoken in Europe, being evidently of Asiatic origin. The few Turkish words, however, furnish no rule that its origin is Arabic, as they are probably remnants of the Ottoman rule in this country; still, whatever may be its derivation, respecting which there are many conflicting opinions, the sounds are pleasing, and I understand it is extremely rich and expressive.

LETTER IV.

CHARACTER OF THE MAGYARS—THEIR LOVE OF LIBERTY—PATRIOTISM—ADOPTION OF THE HUNGARIAN LANGUAGE AS THAT OF THE COUNTRY—LIBERTY OF THE PRESS—LITERATURE—CONSTITUTION OF HUNGARY—ABJECT CONDITION OF THE SERF—PRIVILEGES OF THE NOBILITY.

I HAVE already slightly alluded to the variety of tribes inhabiting Hungary. To describe the characteristics of each minutely, would lead me too much into detail; but I must not omit to mention a few traits of the lords of the country, the Magyars, distinguished from every other by a proud, haughty bearing, and a form finely proportioned, indicating strength and agility, although their height seldom exceeds the middle size; the eye is fiery, and the expression of the countenance extremely animated; this is much improved by the mustachio, which is never parted with, from the first dawn of manhood to the extreme verge of life.

The Magyar may also be known not less by his customs and manners, than by the form of the towns

and villages he inhabits. He is fond of spacious streets, houses, and rooms : the interior, however, is never crowded with furniture, for the peasant is abundantly contented if he can procure a table and a couple of benches, which serve as seats by day, and beds by night. True to the Nomadic life of his Asiatic ancestors, he is always to be found on the vast and fruitful plains of this extensive country, preferring the rich pastures, where his flocks and herds may roam at pleasure, and where he himself may indulge in the sports of the field, to agriculture. He therefore leaves the more laborious employment of raising grain, as unworthy a free son of the forest, to the Sclavonian, German, and Wallachian boors.

The Arab of the desert never practised the virtue of hospitality with more unbounded liberality than the Magyar. The stranger is ever sure to find a cordial welcome, not only in the chateau of the magnat, but in the hut of the peasant. Their character is also distinguished for bravery, sincerity, and open-heartedness, and their manners for a sort of straightforward bluntness, indicating a greater love of truth than courtesy. Strongly attached to liberty, they are impatient of control, and submit with a bad grace to any new laws which may tend to encroach, even in the slightest degree, upon their national

independence ; consequently, the *well-ordered* Austria, with all its complicated government machinery, has never been able to impose upon them the yoke of passports, and a hundred other vexatious ordinances: hence the traveller, who has once passed the frontier, may journey throughout the whole of Hungary without the slightest interruption. The Magyar is also so patriotic, that he not only tells you, but firmly believes, that his country is the freest and greatest in the world.

Without questioning the truth or fallacy of this conviction, there cannot be a doubt than an entirely new epoch has arrived in the history of Hungary, and that she may date her regeneration from the day she extorted from her German king permission to adopt the Hungarian language as that of the country. This measure will not only tend to cement the various races of which the population is composed, but create a national feeling in all classes,—a feeling which it had been the constant policy of Austria, from the period when the Hungarian sceptre first passed into the hand of her monarchs, to repress. To this end the great magnats of the land were cajoled by courtly flattery, which produced the desired effect; for, until the present moment, never was a country more neglected by its landed aristocracy.

Prior to this important concession, the Latin and German languages were adopted by the government, the diet, and the public tribunals; they were also used in all the national documents, and even in commercial transactions. Whereas, we now find all the great men of the country, men as eminent for their talents as their high rank and wealth, engaged in perfecting their native language and literature. Authors are encouraged by pecuniary assistance, supplied from funds contributed expressly for that purpose, both by the Diet and voluntary contributions; and as no law exists to control the press, the Austrian censorship not being recognised by the Hungarian government, we find that a newspaper is published at Pest, advocating the most liberal principles, sanctioned by authority. Several works also have been recently written, alike remarkable for truth of argument and energy of diction, demonstrating the necessity of reforming the various abuses in the national institutions: and many of the magnats being themselves authors, have imparted an additional impetus to literature. With these aids, in addition to steam navigation and commerce, we may confidently predict, that the regeneration of the Hungarian people will gradually but certainly advance, till their social and political institutions, purified of their numerous

abuses, shall be placed upon a basis at once firm and secure.

Indeed, if we contemplate the constitution of Hungary as at present established, and examine each separate part, how numerous are the reforms required, how various the difficulties to be surmounted, before the country can be pronounced in a healthy state. The situation of the peasant, and the absurd rights of the nobility, are still the most prominent evils in the social fabric, even though much has been already done to ameliorate the condition of the serf. It is true, he is no longer the absolute property of the lord of the soil, yet his situation is scarcely less dependent; for besides the heavy tax imposed on him by his seigneur, both in labour and produce, he is obliged to support, in conjunction with the citizen, the heavy impositions of the government, military and civil; while, on the other hand, the privileges of the noble are valuable and exclusive. He alone can hold possession of landed property, he alone is exempt from taxes, custom-house duties, and from the necessity of maintaining the military by billeting, &c. In short, on his own domain, the noble of Hungary is a species of independent sovereign.

Another and still greater mischief of which Hungary has to complain, is, that she is overrun

with a poor and proud nobility, the bane of every country burdened with them. Whatever change may have the effect of depriving these of their prerogatives, provokes a body of malcontents sufficiently numerous, and gifted with sufficient mind, to break down the mounds and dikes which dam in the tide of revolutionary fury.

In order to explain the presence of this overwhelming proportion of noble families, we must refer to the precarious situation of the house of Hapsburg during the reign of Maria Theresa, who, desirous of encouraging the bravery of the Hungarians, gave a patent of nobility to every man who had killed his enemy in battle. This being hereditary in the whole of the children, we find, as a consequence, that almost every second man we meet is a noble. Several of the wealthy magnats have established the law of primogeniture in their families, by which means their rank and influence are properly supported: but unfortunately this practice is not general, the estate being usually divided in equal proportions among the children; hence the swarms of pauper nobles, at once proud, indolent, ignorant, and rapacious, whose crimes fearfully swell the catalogue of offences against law and morality.

With respect to the remedy for this evil, various conflicting opinions are entertained. It is,

however, intended to confer upon the inferior nobility the blessings of a better system of education, with the intention of preparing them for the important changes about to be effected. By a wise foresight, every amelioration in the intellectual condition of the great mass of the people is proceeded in with the greatest care and caution, it being apprehended, that should the veil which shrouds their real condition from their view be prematurely withdrawn, a sanguinary revolution might be the consequence.

But to return to the privileges of the nobility. I understand that a measure will be introduced next year to the Diet, for the purpose of abrogating their right to be exclusively the proprietors of land, and which my friends informed me will be warmly supported by all the enlightened patricians of Hungary. Should this pass into a law, it will have the effect of encouraging the rich mercantile classes and foreigners to purchase landed property, and of giving an impetus to agriculture and commerce. The education of the inferior nobility and peasants also, if persisted in, will, it is to be hoped, have the effect of rendering the eradication of whatever diseases may exist in the body politic practicable, without the interposition of violent remedies.

In pointing out the evils in the administration of Hungary, I must not forget to mention that, in common with the other provinces of the Austrian empire, she is subjected to the same isolating system which that jealous government invariably establishes in all her dependencies. Hence, it is only with the greatest difficulty that the natural products of this most fertile country can find an outlet; while, for her domestic consumption, she is doomed to be inundated with the ill-fabricated and high-priced manufactures of Austria.*

The only excursion I made in the vicinity of Pest was to the Balaton lake, and the mineral bath Fured, denominated, from the peculiar nature of its waters, the Pyrmont of Hungary;

* Since these volumes have been written, the author is happy to say, that the Austrian government, in compliance with the urgent demands of the Hungarian Diet, and no doubt influenced by weighty political considerations, has at length consented to form more liberal commercial regulations. The recent treaty of commerce entered into between Austria and England, so advantageous to both nations, cannot fail, in process of time, to establish between the inhabitants a reciprocity of interests, which, while it enriches them, will form the most effectual barrier against the aggressive policy of Russia, and defeat her ambitious schemes upon the independence of those beautiful and fertile countries watered by the Lower Danube.

and as it is only twenty leagues distant, I would recommend every traveller, who may be an admirer of beautiful scenery, to visit it. The invalid, also, who may be in search of health, will there meet with every accommodation, hotels, medical attendants, &c. He will likewise have the satisfaction of finding that no very heavy demands are made upon his purse; while good society, a theatre, and assembly rooms, will effectually secure him from the intrusion of ennui. To this we may add, that being situated on the shores of the Balaton lake, in the midst of a rural, undulating country, laid out in promenades, the pedestrian may enjoy without fatigue an endless variety of the most charming prospects which this fine lake and delightful country afford to the admirer of natural scenery.

One of the most popular pilgrimages in the environs of the bath is to the romantic Tihany, a fairy-like peninsula situated in the Balaton lake, containing a pretty village, and a monastery belonging to a community of monks. The whole of their little territory, about three leagues in circumference, is completely surrounded by a chain of rocks, where they have their own forests, pastures, corn-fields, and vineyards. It was formerly strongly fortified, and the remains of the walls, castle, and

watch-tower still exist; but the most interesting objects are the caverns which the monks of the middle ages ingeniously constructed, for the purpose of protecting themselves and their property against the frequent devastations of their predatory neighbours the Turks.

The Balaton lake, termed, on account of its length, (upwards of twenty leagues,) the Sea of Hungary, deserves a visit from the traveller, were it for nothing else than to feast upon the rare and delicious fish called the *fogas*, (a species of *perca lucioperca*,) which, I believe, is only found in this lake, and frequently weighs as much as twenty pounds. The banks are not more interesting to the tourist than the geologist; for on the northern side, towards Keszthely, we find an isolated rock, composed of stupendous masses of basalt, evidently an extinct volcano; which, from the singularity of its situation in the midst of a plain, seems as if it had fallen from the heavens, since the neighbouring rocks, composed of limestone, present a continuous range.

The sand found on the shore is principally composed of iron ore and soda; this explains the circumstance of the water being slightly impregnated with mineral; and singular enough, notwithstanding the lake is usually of a crystal clearness, yet it invariably becomes turbid on the

approach of a storm. It is also said to ebb and flow ; and though I did not remain long enough in its vicinity to determine the fact by personal observation, yet I certainly noticed that the water at one time became singularly agitated and increased in volume, even when there was not the slightest wind that could produce such an effect.

In addition to the excellent fish I have already mentioned, the *cyprinus culpratus* and *clupea alburnus* are found here : in appearance they are not unlike our sword-fish, and their visits periodical, like the herring ; they are taken in vast quantities, and when potted, or dried, form an extensive article of commerce, being much prized for their fine flavour. The *helix vivi para* are also inhabitants of this lake, and cray-fish are taken in such numbers at the mouth of the Szala, as to afford a plentiful supply to all the restaurants of Vienna and Pest, where they are much valued by the fastidious gourmands of these wealthy capitals.

In some parts of the lake the banks are composed of curious fossil shells, among which there is one called by the peasants " goats'-feet." This appellation owes its origin to an old legend of Hungary, to the effect that her great king and patron, St. Stephen, at one time a fugitive, wandered along the banks of the lake ; and being

entirely destitute of resources, applied for hospitality to a rich landed proprietor in the vicinity, who inhumanly drove him from his door. The saint, violently incensed, cursed the churlish landholder, and all that belonged to him; when immediately pestilence swept away his cattle, fire consumed his houses, disease destroyed his family, and a dreadful hurricane hurled his numerous flocks of goats from the steep sides of the rocks into the lake: and that this wonderful legend should not want confirmation, their petrified hoofs are constantly being thrown up in the form of shells!

LETTER V.

LEAVE PEST FOR GALATZ—THE PANNONIA STEAM-BOAT—PASSENGERS—COUNT ESTERHAZY—BUFFALOES—ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY—PETERWARDEIN, THE GIBRALTAR OF THE DANUBE—MILITARY CORDON OF AUSTRIA—FLOURISHING STATE OF THE COLONY—COSTUME OF THE PEOPLE.

THE directors of the steam navigation having decided on despatching a new steam-boat down the Danube to Galatz, for the purpose of ascertaining how far it was practicable, from the great height the water had attained, to cross the dangerous cataract called the Iron Gate, I resolved to make one of her passengers on the somewhat hazardous expedition; for though various works are in progress to facilitate this object, yet steam navigation had not hitherto been attempted on that part of the river.

The *Pannonia* is a pretty little flat-bottomed boat, of thirty-six horse power; its form and interior arrangements being similar to those running between London and Gravesend. She is commanded by a well-behaved Venetian, Giovanni

Clician. The accommodation was excellent, so far as regarded a ladies' cabin, and a large saloon furnished with divans, the whole kept remarkably clean ; but there being no regular berths, the sofas performed the duty of beds, and the traveller is much inconvenienced while performing his toilet. The same censure is also applicable to this boat as to the *Nador*, with respect to refreshments, which were considered by the passengers as too high-priced for a country where provisions may be purchased at a lower rate than in any other part of Europe. The stranger, however, has the advantage of being able to resort to a fixed tariff, in which the price of every article has been regulated by the directors of the steam navigation company.

We had but few passengers on board, and these were principally Hungarian noblemen on their way to the fashionable bath Mehadia, in the Banate. I was much pleased to find among them my old friend Count Francis Esterhazy ; there were also several Austrian dragoon officers, proceeding to join their regiments in lower Hungary. I was equally surprised and gratified on discovering one of them to be an Englishman, Lieutenant Isaacson ; from whom I learned that several of our countrymen since the peace had entered the Austrian army as cadets, where it appears their ser-

vices are highly prized, and meet with every encouragement.

The scenery, after leaving Pest, was neither interesting nor striking, consisting principally of immense plains, upon which herds of cattle, including great numbers of buffaloes, were feeding, apparently to their hearts' content, the herbage being most luxuriant. I cannot but think that the latter would be an acquisition to the farmer in England, and would find themselves quite at home while wallowing in the fens of Lincolnshire. Count Esterhazy, himself a great landed proprietor, informed me their flesh, while young, was quite equal to the best veal, and their milk infinitely richer than that of the cow: besides, from their great strength, they would be found very serviceable in performing agricultural labours.

Water-mills, islands covered with foliage, a few straggling villages of the peasants, together with the primitive vessels of the Danube boatmen, lent their aid in giving some variety to the landscape; while numerous flocks of wild fowl rent the air with their piercing cries, and the very eagles, unaccustomed to being disturbed by man in this half-deserted country, approached our vessel almost within pistol-shot.

At Apatin, the Danube forms a considerable curve; when, after swelling into a foaming surge,

and being increased by the accession of the Drave, the turbulent stream, with a loud roar, bore us quickly forward to Erdöd. This little town is supposed to be built on the spot where the ancient Teutoburgum once stood, on account of the number of Roman antiquities found in the neighbourhood. It is pleasantly situated on a small peninsula of hills covered with vineyards, and rendered still more picturesque by a venerable castle belonging to the family of the Counts Palffy. Here also commences the extensive province of Sclavonia. Shortly after passing another ruin, called Scharengrad, a range of fine picturesque hills relieves the plain from its almost unvarying uniformity, which continued improving in beauty till we arrived at Beges, a town belonging to Count Brunswick, a short distance from Peterwardein, the Gibraltar of the Danube, where we cast anchor for the night.

Peterwardein, or, as the Hungarians call it, Petervara-Varadin, is said to have been honoured by being the birth-place of the famous Peter the Hermit, of crusade-preaching memory. The fortress, from being situated on an isolated hill, is most formidable as a military position, sweeping every approach by land or water: it is also so extensive, as to be capable of receiving a garrison of ten thousand men. The town is

united with Neusatz, on the opposite bank, by a well-constructed bridge of boats, containing together a population of about twenty thousand. Peterwardein is one of the most important stations of the military cordon established by Austria to protect her provinces in this part of the empire from the predatory incursions of the Turks, and the entrance of the plague. This admirable cordon extends from the Bocca di Cattaro, in Lower Dalmatia on the Adriatic, to the Bukovina on the frontiers of Poland; traversing the provinces of Croatia, Sclavonia, Hungary, and Transylvania: being a distance of four hundred and fifty-five leagues, inhabited by a population of nearly one million two hundred thousand, who hold their lands, rights, and privileges on the express condition of performing military service in defence of the frontiers. To this every man is liable, from the age of eighteen to fifty; after which time, for the next ten years, they have to perform the duties usually entrusted to superannuated soldiers.

The whole of the *cordon militaire* contains seventeen regiments of infantry, one of hussars, and a battalion of marines, who are employed in the armed boats on the rivers. Each regiment, in time of peace, consists only of two

battalions, or twelve companies, the half of which (five thousand) are constantly occupied in guarding the frontiers; but when the plague makes its appearance in the Turkish provinces, their numbers are increased to seven or even ten thousand: and in cases of emergency, such as when an invading army threatens to cross the frontiers, they can bring into the field upwards of thirty-three thousand well-disciplined troops. Each regiment elects its own colonel, who unites with his military authority that of a civil magistrate. Every two regiments are commanded by a brigadier-general; and every two brigades by what the Austrians term a *general commando*, of whom there are four, stationed in various districts on the line of frontier, and acting under the immediate orders of the minister of war at Vienna.

Along the whole line a range of guard-houses has been erected, sufficiently near to communicate with each other: and when a river intervenes, they are built on pontoons. Those in the mountain districts, being hewn out of the rock, are most formidable; and as they are frequently hid from observation by embankments, or shaded by foliage, they become a fatal ambuscade against an invading army. Each of these guard-houses is sufficiently large to contain twelve

men; this number, however, varies according to circumstances, as we find them only guarded at present by four men and a sentinel.

Behind this chain are the guard-houses of the officers, furnished with alarm-bells, &c.; by which means, in cases of extreme danger, the inhabitants of the whole line of this immense frontier can be assembled under arms in less than four hours. No traveller is permitted to cross the line without applying to the nearest military station; and during the prevalence of the plague, or in time of war, he is liable to be shot by the nearest sentinel, if he does not immediately reply to the challenge, by standing still, and answering the customary interrogatories.

This very interesting district, which only twenty years since was regarded by the Austrian officers sent thither as a sort of transportation, presents at the present day so improved an aspect, that the traveller never fails to congratulate himself on entering the country included in the military cordon; where he finds not only some of the best kept roads in the Austrian empire, but good inns. The towns and villages are also better built, and frequently adorned with public promenades for the amusement of the people, whom he sees on Sundays and

holidays dressed in their finery, and dancing to the merry sounds of the violin and the bagpipe. The agricultural fields of these military peasants, when contrasted with those of the poor degraded serfs, their neighbours, also exhibit, in their neatness and high degree of cultivation, the industry of the inhabitants, and the real interest they have in the soil; nor are their little picturesque cottages, surrounded by blooming gardens, less indicative of the comfort and independence they enjoy; for here neither the exacting hand of a rapacious seigneur, nor of a heartless tax-gatherer, is felt to rob the poor peasant of the produce of his labour. In short, the whole of the districts included in the military cordon, whether situated in the vicinity of the wild hordes inhabiting the countries of Lower Dalmatia, or the Buckowina adjoining Russo-Bessarabia, present a picture of civilisation, prosperity, and contentment, cheering to the heart of every philanthropic traveller who may visit them.

These military peasants live in a state of the most patriarchal simplicity; for we often find several generations, amounting even to seventy persons, residing amicably beneath the same roof. In some instances, families united by consanguinity form themselves into communities, devote their common labour to the cultivation of

the soil, and divide the produce in equal shares; they also generally elect the man, whose conduct is the most exemplary, as a sort of chief, who, in such domestic dissensions as may arise between them, fulfils the office of judge.

Whenever these communities are established, each provides its own soldiers from the common fund, with uniforms and rations while performing military duty, which is by no means severe, as it only occupies one-third of their time, the remainder being reserved for agricultural labour, &c.

Although the military language of the inhabitants of these military colonies is German, yet they are, with few exceptions, Sclavonians, Wallachians, and Hungarians, intermingled with Greeks, Germans, Jews, and Gipsies, each retaining their peculiar costume and language. Notwithstanding this diversity of people, the difference in their customs, manners, and religion; broils and disputes, owing to the strict subordination preserved among them by their chiefs, are rarely heard of, and crime in its darker shades, I was informed from good authority, is nearly unknown. This results from the circumstance, that poverty and idleness, those fruitful sources of evil, here can never intrude; for every man must perform his military duties, and pursue

his individual occupation, whether as agriculturist, artisan, manufacturer, &c.; while each separate community makes ample provision for the aged and helpless of its members.

Human nature could scarcely have devised a more efficient barrier for the protection of an extensive empire like Austria than these military colonies, as they are at once effectual to their end, and little or no expense to the government. Every man being a soldier, and at the same time a proprietor of land, patriotism and interest combine to inspire him with a degree of courage and determination to defend his father-land, unknown to the mere mercenary, who enters the service of his country solely with the view of earning a daily pittance. Above all, in despotic countries, what military enthusiasm can be expected from the poor peasant who is torn from his home, and compelled to enter the ranks? Thus Austria has, at the present day, the double satisfaction of seeing countries, that were formerly a desert, inhabited by a prosperous, a happy people, and her widely extended frontier guarded by men capable of arresting even the serious invasion of an enemy, at least till she would be able to despatch an adequate force to their support.

In that part of the military banate of Hun-

gary and Sclavonia through which we now travelled, the inhabitants having been exposed for centuries to the inroads of their predatory neighbours, the Turks and Tartars, scarcely ever leave home, on any occasion, without being well armed; and not unfrequently we see the women, Amazon-like, with a brace of pistols in their girdles, to say nothing of the poniard, which they never part with. The warlike appearance of the men imparted quite a novel aspect to the landscape, as we beheld them from the deck of our steamer, enveloped in the folds of their scarlet capuchins and mantles, striding through the deep valleys, or climbing up the steep mountains, with their long guns slung across the shoulder.

LETTER VI.

CARLOWITZ—RIVER THEISS—INSALUBRITY OF ITS BANKS—SEMLIN—BELGRADE—FORTIFICATIONS—PRINCIPALITY OF SERVIA—FERTILITY OF THE COUNTRY—VAST HERDS OF SWINE—PRINCE MILOSCH—HIS GOVERNMENT—SIMPLICITY OF THE LAWS—COSTUME OF THE SERVIANS AND SCLAVONIANS—CASTLE OF SEMENDRIA—TURKISH FORTIFICATIONS—SUBLIME SCENERY OF THE DANUBE—CASTLE OF GOLUBACS—SINGULAR POISONOUS FLY—THEIR DREADFUL RAVAGES.

After leaving Peterwardein, the right bank of the river presented a dreary plain of sand, the effect of repeated inundations, till we came to Carlowitz, one of the free military towns included in the cordon. Its situation, at the foot of a group of vine-clad hills, is most picturesque : nor is this the only advantage derived from these luxuriant vineyards, for the wine they produce is some of the best in Hungary ; and the liqueur Absynthe, which is made here in large quantities, is equally celebrated.

The only town worth mentioning between Carlowitz and Semlin is Slankamen, the Ritium of

the Romans. Here the Theiss, one of the most important rivers of Hungary, when viewed in connexion with commerce, forms a junction with the Danube, after having traversed an immense tract of that country, and also of Transylvania. The banks of this river are, with few exceptions, considered unhealthy, partly owing to the sluggish pace at which the stream travels, and partly to the inundations, which, on retiring, leave extensive marshes; but though sufficiently injurious to the health of man, the miasma does not appear to have the same effect upon that of the finny tribe, who are found here in abundance unequalled by any other European river. At its mouth I saw, for the first time, the Danube fleet, a small flotilla of gunboats; the bloated, pallid countenances of the marines who manned them, sadly evidenced the insalubrity of the station.

We now steered our course between numerous small islands to Semlin, advantageously situated a short distance from Belgrade, where the Save runs into the Danube, after having formed the frontier between Hungary and the Turkish province of Servia. At Semlin we were detained four hours, before the military commander could find leisure to sign our passports. Did this originate from culpable inattention to the duties of his office? Or is the Austrian government soli-

citous to throw every obstacle in the way of the steam navigation of the Danube? We here took in a supply of coal, which, the English engineer informed me, was of a quality equal to any we have in England.

The once-celebrated fortress of Belgrade, so long the object of contention between the Hungarians and the Osmanlis, now presents no sterner aspect than a picturesque ruin; but the style of buildings in the town, and the numerous minarets of the mosques, are so completely Eastern, that the attention of the European traveller is forcibly arrested. The citadel, erected on a bold promontory between the junction of the Save and the Danube, is, in a military point of view, most formidable; and if properly repaired and garrisoned, together with the fortifications on the low ground at the junction of the rivers, sweeping, as they do, every approach by land or water, they might defy the strongest efforts of an enemy. Here I first observed a few boats with sails; which proved that this people, so little advanced in civilisation, were yet better navigators than any I had hitherto seen on the Danube.

The villages on the Servian side of the river were extremely miserable, the huts appearing unworthy of any better inhabitants than quadrupeds. The country, however, seemed most

fertile, being beautifully variegated with noble trees, blooming corn-fields, pastures, and vineyards: indeed such is its fecundity, I was assured by one of our passengers, a landed proprietor of Servia, that the country is capable of nourishing a population of five millions; whereas, at present, it contains no more than about half a million. In fact, these provinces are still in a most primitive state, and land may be purchased at nearly as little cost as in the back settlements of North America. The inhabitants devote the soil, principally, to the maintenance of vast herds of swine, which prove very profitable; for a peasant, at first possessed of merely a dozen, finds himself, in consequence of their rapid multiplication, in a short time the master of hundreds; and having the privilege of turning them into the extensive forests which abound in Servia, their food costs nothing. For a market he resorts to Hungary, where he ever finds a ready sale; from whence they are transported into Austria, being highly valued by the accomplished gourmands of Vienna, on account of their exquisite flavour.

The Hungarian side of the Danube now presented one vast plain covered with immense flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, horses, &c., attended

by most patriarchal-looking shepherds. But to return to Turkish Servia: — This interesting country is fast advancing in civilisation under the sway of Prince Milosch, who, though originally an uneducated peasant, is yet worthy, by his talents and virtues, of the high station to which fate has advanced him. He has given a constitution to his people, left trade unfettered by restrictions, his ports on the Danube are open to ships of every nation, and foreigners are encouraged to settle in the country for the purpose of assisting to civilise the natives. Another benefit resulting from his administration is the safety with which a traveller may now journey through his dominions; whereas, only a few years since, the roads were infested by bands of robbers. His system of police is at once simple and efficacious: for whenever a robbery or murder is committed, the inhabitants of the nearest village or town are made responsible for the deed, and must either find the delinquent, or pay a considerable fine.

Another regulation of the law is, that should any article of value be found on the highway, it must be left on the spot where it was discovered; the presumption being, that the owner will return and claim his property. However singular this method of governing may appear to more civilised

nations, yet in this it has certainly the effect of making the people, who are not yet emerged from primitive barbarism, honest.

The dress of the Servian peasantry is not unpicturesque, consisting of a red cap, a linen tunic descending below the knees, confined by a leather belt embroidered with silk or wool; over this is worn a drab-coloured jacket with red facings: they no longer carry arms, but have instead a long knife stuck in the girdle. The women who, from their small Grecian features and well-formed feet and ankles, deserve the appellation of pretty, were also becomingly attired. They did not appear confined to any particular head-dress: some wore a shawl; others a turban; but the better classes a red Grecian cap, confined by a band of plaited silk, the same colour as their hair.

The peasantry on the Hungarian side of the Danube, a Sclavonian race, had adopted a different costume: the men wore for a head-dress a cap made of curled wool, somewhat resembling in appearance a mop without a handle; and the women, whose attire was *bizarre* enough, were clothed in a many-coloured woollen petticoat, which descended to the knee, and was then finished with a broad plaited fringe that came down to the ankle. Do not suppose that these plaits were connected with each other; on the

contrary, each hung like a separate pendant; and when the fair creature stepped, or a gust of wind set the rattling fringe in motion, the effect was very ludicrous; and, certainly, of all the feminine accoutrements it was ever my lot to behold in Europe, these were the most unique. The women of both countries were generally employed in spinning from the distaff; and I frequently saw them thus occupied, and at the same time carrying a pail of milk on the head, and an infant slung behind in a basket.

The scenery on the Servian side of the river continued to improve, being finely wooded; while that of the Hungarian had nothing to relieve the monotony, except a continued range of guard-houses belonging to the military cordon to which I have before alluded. The object that next arrested my attention, was the town and castle of Semendria. The castle is a most singular looking building, of a triangular form, consisting of twenty-seven towers joined together by curtains apparently of solid masonry. No doubt, a fort of this description is extremely formidable when defended by Turks, owing to their known obstinacy when fighting behind stone walls; but it does not come within the pale of what may be called a regular fortification of the present day. After descending the river a little further, we

came to a succession of these Turkish fortifications, all more or less in a dilapidated state.

A short distance below Palanka, the Hungarian mountains in the Upper Banate approached nearly in conjunction with those of Servia on the opposite bank, and gradually contracting the bed of the river, from about two English miles in breadth to little more than a hundred paces, converted the majestic stream into a tempestuous torrent. The impetuosity of the river continued to increase in violence, till we came to the famous rock called Babakäly, rising out of the centre of the river. Here the roaring of the waters as they lashed its flinty sides, the romantic ruins perched on the summits of the rocks, the multitude of eagles hovering around, and the wild character of the country, combined to form a scene of singular beauty and grandeur, far superior to any even the most sublime of the Upper Danube.

During the wars between the Austrians and Turks, this was the most formidable pass of the river; here the latter erected the fortified castle of Golubacs, perched on the summit of a stupendous rock; now only remarkable as a picturesque ruin, and for the singularity of its architecture, with its nine towers, some square, others round or triangular.

Near this place we found a range of caverns, famous for producing the poisonous fly, too well known in Servia and Hungary under the name of the Golubacser fly. These singular and venomous insects, somewhat resembling musquitoes, generally make their appearance, during the first great heat of summer, in such numbers as to seem like vast volumes of smoke; their attacks are always directed against every description of quadruped, and so potent is the poison they communicate, that even an ox is unable to withstand its influence, for he always expires in less than two hours. This results, not so much from the virulence of the poison, as that every vulnerable part is simultaneously covered with these most destructive insects; when the wretched animals, frenzied with pain, rush wild through the fields till death puts a period to their sufferings, or they accelerate dissolution by plunging headlong into the rivers.

The shepherds of these countries, taught by experience the time of their approach, previously anoint every part of their flocks and herds, unprotected by nature, with a strong decoction of wormwood; to which, it appears, these flies have a great antipathy. In addition to this, the shepherds keep immense fires constantly blazing; around which the poor animals, aware of their

danger, tremblingly and patiently congregate. Kind nature has, however, mercifully ordained that the existence of these destructive insects shall be most ephemeral; for the slightest variation in the weather is sufficient to destroy the whole swarm; hence they seldom live beyond a few days. Indeed their very production seems to depend upon the state of the weather: for in those summers when the thermometer continues low, they never make their appearance, except in diminished numbers; whereas, when great heat and drought prevail during the whole of that season, they have been known to swarm two or even three times, although even then their existence is always extremely brief.

Their ravages are principally confined to the surrounding countries of Servia and the Hungarian Banate: but Count Esterhazy informed me that on some occasions they (or at least a similar species of fly) have extended their flight as far as his estates in the neighbourhood of Presburg, where their attacks were fatal to numbers of his cattle. The peasants for this, as for every other phenomenon, have resorted to a miracle for explanation; and tell us that in these caverns the renowned champion St. George killed the dragon, whose decomposed remains have continued to generate these insects down to the present day.

The probable supposition however is, that when the Danube rises, which it always does in the early part of summer, the caverns are flooded, and the water remaining in them becomes putrid, and produces, during the heat of summer, this most noxious fly. Under this impression, the inhabitants of the country, many years since, closed up the mouths of the caverns with stone walls, for the purpose of preventing their egress; but the expedient availed nothing, and the rushing of the waters against the sides of the rocks, in process of time, destroyed the useless defence: so that it must be evident, either that the insects are not generated here, or that the caverns have subterraneous communications with some other outlets at present unknown.

LETTER VII.

WHIRLPOOLS OF THE DANUBE—VETERANI CAVERN—ROMAN ANTIQUITIES—MILANOVA—PASSPORTS—MEHADIA MINERAL BATH—EFFICACY OF THE WATERS—BEAUTY OF THE SURROUNDING COUNTRY—NEU-ORSOVA—DETENTION OF THE STEAM-BOAT BY THE PACHA—VISIT TO THE PACHA—AUSTRIAN TIMIDITY—CATARACT OF THE DANUBE—PANNONIA THE FIRST STEAM-BOAT THAT PASSED IT—WILD CHARACTER OF THE SCENERY—PRINCIPALITY OF WALLACHIA—KLADOVA—TURKISH PILOTS.

In my last letter I informed you of our arrival at Golubacs, and I felt not a little pleased to learn that our bark was now about to glide through some of the most beautiful scenery of the Danube. The mountains increased in altitude as we advanced, and the curves in the river formed a succession of the most charming lakes, till we came to the whirlpool called Tachtalia, an object of great terror to the navigators; and not without some reason, for many a vessel has here sunk to rise no more: even so lately as the year 1833, we were informed that five were wrecked.

This danger arises from the circumstance that

the bed of the river is here entirely formed of isolated masses of perpendicular rocks, between which it is necessary for the pilot to steer with great caution, but more particularly when the water is shallow; for should a vessel deviate from the right channel, it runs the risk of being carried away by the impetuous violence of the stream, and dashed to pieces by the foaming surge, as it rebounds from rock to rock. The difficulties in the navigation have, however, been considerably lessened within these few years by the judicious efforts of the directors of the steam navigation on the Danube, who have caused the most dangerous rocks to be blasted; so that at present the only hazard arises from the negligence of the captain, who may employ an inexperienced pilot.

We journeyed on through a continuation of whirlpools, surrounded by scenery of a similar character to that I have already described, till we came to the cavern Piscabora, famous for having been so bravely defended by the gallant Austrian general, M. Veterani, against the Turks in 1692; since which time it has borne his name. This excavation, entirely the work of nature, is capable of containing from six to seven hundred men, independently of an adjoining cavern well adapted to serve as a powder magazine; and from its situa-

tion in the rocks, is not only impregnable, but completely commands the river. Its importance as a military position seems to have been discovered by the Romans, for we find the remains of an inscription to that effect in its vicinity: indeed we are everywhere reminded, in the countries near this part of the Danube, of the dominion of the Roman empire. On the Servian side there are the remains of the road cut by Trajan along the sides of the rock, now used by the peasants as a footpath; together with the tablet erected to immortalise the conquest of Dacia by the same emperor. It bears the form of a scroll, supported by winged genii, having on each side a dolphin, and in the centre the Roman eagle; but in consequence of the Danube boatmen, who have been accustomed to stop here with their vessels and kindle fires, it has been deplorably mutilated; so that the only portion of the inscription now visible is the two first lines,

IMP. CÆS. D. NERVÆ. FILIUS NERVA TRAJANUS.
GERM. PONT. (MAX) IMUS. . . .

A few miles further, a pretty modern village, built by Prince Milosch and called Milanova, after his son Mila, gladdens the eye of the traveller; and at Alt Orsova, the last town in Hungary, we were again obliged to remain four hours, while the Austrian authorities affixed their signa-

tures to our passports, whereas a quarter of an hour would have been amply sufficient for the purpose. Here I lost the society of my venerable and respected friend, Count Esterhazy, who was proceeding to the baths of Mehadia, one of the most amiable and excellent men I ever travelled with, and whose memory, even if I had no other reasons, would be sufficient to induce me ever to respect Hungary and the Hungarians.

This pretty bath, which I visited some years since, has become, partly in consequence of the steam navigation on the Danube, (from whence it is distant only a few leagues,) and partly from the inherent efficacy of the waters, extremely popular. They were known to the Romans, who called them—from the high temperature of the water, exceeding forty-seven degrees of Reaumur, and also probably from the copiousness of the supply exceeding that of any other in Europe, "Thermæ Herculis ad aquas."

There are twenty-two springs, nine of which are at present in use; and if we may believe the accounts of their healing powers, they effect a cure in most chronic cases of scrofula, cutaneous diseases, rheumatism, gout, contractions of the limbs, consumption of the lungs, diseases of the eyes, &c. Nor do their sanative qualities constitute the only attraction of these baths, for the

surrounding country is beautiful, abounding with romantic valleys and lofty hills. In addition to this, the climate is so mild, that we find the fig, and other trees peculiar to southern climes, growing wild in the woods; and at the same time so genial, that the most delicate invalid may remain exposed to the air until a very late hour in the evening. Promenades are laid out with shady alleys in the vicinity, and several fine hotels have been recently constructed and fitted up with every accommodation for the visiters, who may here indulge in all the moderate luxuries of life for about a dollar a day!

Upon approaching the Turkish fortress Neu-Orsova, an officer belonging to the garrison hailed the vessel, and informed us that, unless we were provided with a firman, we could not pass. This intelligence was anything but agreeable, for neither the captain nor any of the passengers possessed the desired document. The matter was long debated between the captain of the steamboat and several Austrian officers, passengers; and at length it was agreed that we should return to Alt-Orsova till the firman could be procured. I found, however, that the captain, a very spirited man, was inclined to go forward, on the ground that permission had been already generally accorded for the free navigation of the Danube; I therefore proposed to the Austrian major that we

should proceed together to the fortress, and learn from the Pacha himself the cause of our detention. After long debating the matter, *pro* and *con*, like a true German, he at length consented; and accordingly, attended by an officer of the sanatory guard, we set off for the fortress, a miserable half-ruined building.

We were immediately introduced to the Pacha, a fair-complexioned fine-looking man, about forty years of age, with a most patriarchal beard; he was dressed in the Turkish uniform, a dark blue frock coat, light blue pantaloons, and a red cloth cap with a very large blue silk tassel. He received us most affably, and his manners would have done no discredit to a courtier of St. James's. Previous to commencing our negociation, coffee was brought in, which, as is invariably the case in Turkey, was excellent, and served in a style of much elegance. The tray was covered with an embroidered napkin, edged with silver fringe; and the cups, of the finest Chinese porcelain, rested upon silver stands.

The Austrian officer, who spoke the Turkish language fluently, introduced me to the Pacha. The worthy Turk, upon learning that I was an Englishman, received me with the most marked courtesy; and when we had taken coffee and smoked our tchibouques, we related the object of

our mission, to which he listened with the most polite attention. After deliberating a few minutes with his officers, he replied, that he had received instructions from his government not to permit any foreign vessel to pass down the Danube without a firman ; " but," continued he, smiling, " my orders do not include a mandate to fire, in case you choose to proceed on your own responsibility. In that event, however, I shall send an express to my superior officer, the Governor Pacha of Widdin." We then made our congé and departed.

Upon detailing the particulars of our interview to the remainder of the passengers, they with one consent announced their intention of quitting the boat. " What !" said the well-trained Austrians, " journey on in open defiance of established authority ? Impossible. Suppose the Pacha should take it into his head that sending a few bullets at ours was a duty incumbent upon him, are we to sacrifice our lives for a foolish firman ? No. Proceed, captain, if you will ; but we must, though very reluctantly, bid you adieu ;" and they instantly quitted the vessel, leaving me the honour of being the first traveller who had journeyed down the whole of the lower Danube in a steam-boat from Vienna to the Black Sea.

After proceeding a little further, we came to the famous cataract of the Danube, called by the

Turks Demirkapi, or the iron gate, so termed because it was formerly deemed impassable; but now, in consequence of the height the river had attained, we crossed this formidable pass without much difficulty. Thus our steam-vessel was the first which had accomplished this somewhat perilous feat, the directors of the steam navigation company having hitherto provided carriages for the conveyance of their passengers by land over this part of the route. To obviate this inconvenience, it is proposed to cut a canal on the Servian side, the company preferring this alternative to that of deepening the bed of the river, which would be a most expensive undertaking. Indeed, upon surveying the ground through which it is intended to pass, we cannot avoid coming to the conclusion that a canal had formerly existed there, most probably the work of the Romans; which, on their expulsion from the country, fell into disuse, and in process of time became filled up.

The Demirkapi cataract, unquestionably the most sublime part of the Danube from its source in the Black Forest of Germany to the Euxine, is considerably heightened in picturesque effect by the wild character of the surrounding country. Here the majestic river, pent up in a narrow channel, rushes between stupendous rocks down

the descent with the rapidity of lightning, and with a crash so tremendous as to overpower every other sound; while the foaming surge, as it broke with violence over the deck, and lashed the sides of our vessel, gave to the river the appearance of the sea when agitated by a storm. Nor was this all; for before our arrival at the cataract, we had to pass through a succession of whirlpools and inconsiderable waterfalls, which, though not dangerous, added very much to the romantic character of our voyage.

We had now passed all the horrors of the Danube, and the turbulence of the stream gradually subsided. The right bank still continued Servia, while on the left we had the principality of Wallachia, at whose first town, Kladova, we cast anchor. During the time occupied by the authorities in signing our passports, the captain and myself accepted the invitation of the agent of the steam-vessel, who resided here. Our host and his wife, a pretty little woman, were Hungarians; they entertained us most hospitably, and I was not a little surprised to find in this remote part of the world, among many other luxuries of the table, ices, exquisite confectionery, and delicious wines. The lady, however, did not forget to tell us that she was nobly born, and bitterly lamented the want of society in the desert which now formed

her residence: still she did every justice to the character of the Wallachian peasants, describing them as honest, kind-hearted, and obliging. She also informed us that provisions were extremely cheap,—meat not more than a penny a pound, poultry, bread, and excellent wine equally reasonable; so that it would appear from her account, that a man might here live like an alderman for about twenty pounds a year.

After bidding farewell to our kind host and hostess, we passed over to the Servian side, and took in two Turks as pilots. It was rather a novel spectacle to an Englishman to see these turbaned fellows at the helm of a steam-packet, and to hear our Italian captain giving the words of command, "Ease her,"—"Stop her,"—"Go on," in broken English. Indeed, in whatever part of the world I have travelled in a steam-boat, or by whomsoever commanded, whether Turk, Greek, Italian, German, or Russian, still I heard a repetition of these words, though sometimes delivered with such an accent as rendered them almost unintelligible. Thus they will probably become naturalised in the language of every nation in the world adopting steam navigation.

LETTER VIII.

DESOLATION AND FERTILITY—REMAINS OF THE BRIDGE BUILT BY TRAJAN—ENTER BULGARIA—GOTHIC CASTLE AT FLORENTIN — WIDDIN — FORTIFICATIONS — NIKOPOLIS—RUTSCHUCK—GIURGEWO—WRETCHED APPEARANCE OF THE TOWN AND INHABITANTS—FOREST OF THISTLES—CURIOSITY OF THE WALLACHIANS—SILISTRIA—FORTIFICATIONS—TURKS AND RUSSIANS—MARSHES—MUSQUITOES—ADVICE TO TRAVELLERS.

THE scenery, though no longer sublime, was still lovely, particularly on the Servian side. The luxuriant pastures, sprinkled with flocks and herds, shelving down to the water's edge, were perhaps succeeded by a dense forest; which, in turn, gave way to parks formed by the hand of nature, that might serve as models to the landscape gardener. Notwithstanding this apparent fertility of the soil, the country appeared as thinly populated as if it had been subject for ages to the ravages of war; and the few villages, without garden or any rural embellishment, were the very personification of misery. I visited several, on each side of the

river, and found the interior of the huts to correspond in wretchedness with the exterior. Still, in glaring contrast to all this evidence of poverty, the women were generally well dressed; wearing on the head a sort of tiara, ornamented with small gold Turkish coins, besides costly necklaces, bracelets, and earrings. Many of them were pretty, and their small delicate features indicated their Grecian origin.

The next remarkable object we came to, was the ruins of the bridge built by command of the Emperor Trajan, after his conquest over the Dacian king, Decebalus. The remains of the arches are visible at low water, and the towers on each side of the river still maintain their position, in defiance of the storms of ages. The historian Dio Cassius tells us it was entirely built of cut stone by the architect, Apollodorus Damascenes; that it was a hundred and fifty feet high, sixty feet broad, and nine hundred feet long. This stupendous work was subsequently destroyed by Adrian, for the purpose of checking the progress of the barbarians. Near the Servian village Werbitza, we passed a number of fishing-boats; the men were engaged in hauling up a tremendous sturgeon, which it appears are very plentiful in this part of the river. Here the Danube made one of its most extensive curves,

bringing us back again nearly opposite the Turkish fortress at Neu-Orsova, whose Pacha we visited the preceding day.

The river Timak, which flows into the Danube at the village of Gruja, forms the boundary between the provinces of Servia and Bulgaria; and in a short time the eye of the traveller is gladdened by the sight of the pretty village Florentin, situated close to the river, and overhung by the picturesque ruin of a gothic castle seated upon a high rock, forming altogether a very lovely landscape. Soon after we arrived at the fortress and populous town of Widdin, the residence of a Pacha, and said to contain twenty thousand inhabitants; numbers of whom were now assembled on the heights to see us, appearing not a little to enjoy the novel spectacle, while it was equally amusing to us to behold the crowds in their long flowing robes, cheering the aquatic wonder. The fortifications at Widdin appeared to be on a splendid scale and in good order, showing a formidable front along the banks of the river, flanked and protected at intervals by bastions: those on the land side were equally well executed, the whole mounting nearly three hundred guns. Several Turkish vessels, of about two hundred tons burden, were here lying at anchor, and others loading and reloading their cargoes; exhibiting an appearance of activity un-

usual to the Danube, from which we may infer that no inconsiderable commerce is carried on by the inhabitants.

I now caught a glimpse, for the first time, of the Balkan mountains, and the stupendous rock Kaszan, well known to the traveller who journeys on the banks of the Danube. The country did not offer any remarkable feature, till we came to the fortress and town of Nikopolis, originally built by the Romans. The situation is picturesque, lying partly on the brow of a range of chalky cliffs, and partly covering the bed of a narrow valley; and a little lower down the river stands the Bulgarian town of Sestos. Here we cast anchor for the night, but were not allowed to land by the sanatory officer on board, unless we chose to go through the tedious ceremony of the lazaretto. Sestos is said to contain upwards of twenty thousand inhabitants, and to carry on a considerable trade with Constantinople. It is memorable for the peace concluded here between Austria and the Ottoman Porte in 1791.

Bulgaria still continued hilly, and the river had expanded to at least a league in breadth by the time we came to Rutschuck. This is also a fortified town, and, like Widdin, one of the most important and well-defended military stations belonging to the Turks on the Danube, and said to contain thirty thousand inhabitants. It certainly

bore all the appearance of a populous town, for myriads were assembled to greet us as we passed.

We stopped at Giurgewo, in Wallachia, to take in coals and provisions, which induced me to accompany the steward to the town, situated on an arm of the Danube, some distance from the main stream. Our route lay through a vast unenclosed steppe, with here and there an encampment of the half-naked, wild-looking natives, surrounded by flocks of sheep, mules, asses, buffaloes, &c. Were a native of Caledonia rambling over this long-neglected but fertile country, he might indeed contemplate with rapture his national emblem, which here proudly rears its lofty head to a height of at least seven feet. Its myriads of blossoms formed a forest in bloom, and not only charmed the eye by their bright colours, but filled the air with the balmy fragrance they emitted.

Giurgewo did not repay the trouble of struggling through so many difficulties; for, in addition to that of threading our way through a prickly forest, we were obliged to ford a river that rose nearly breast high. I found the town, like every other I had hitherto seen in the Turkish empire, composed of dirty narrow streets, and houses built of mud, with here and there one a little more pretending in its appearance, ornamented

by a wooden verandah. I was therefore obliged to console myself for my disappointment by an excellent cup of coffee and a tchibouque in one of the numerous coffee-houses, the only dwellings that really bore the semblance of comfort in the whole town.

The inhabitants appeared to have no better occupation than to loll the whole day on their little carpets, and smoke the tchibouque. Even the storks seemed to have caught the same do-nothing apathy, for they were reposing quietly with their young ones in nests on the tops of the houses. A few of the women, however, as is usually the case in half-civilised countries, were somewhat more industriously disposed; for they were to be seen pursuing the twofold employment of spinning from the distaff, and inhaling the fragrance of the narcotic herb from pipes quite as long as those of their lords. But of the whole population of Giurgewo, the canine alone exhibited the most untiring activity, as they diligently prowled the streets in search of food.

On returning to our vessel, I found the banks of the river covered with a motley collection of Wallachians of all ranks and ages, together with the most primitive-looking vehicles you can imagine. Numbers of the wondering multitude, not contented with viewing the steam-boat from the shore, crowded its decks; upon which the captain,

who was fond of a joke, made signals to his men to draw up the gangway, and set the vessel in motion. The scene that then ensued was highly ludicrous; the women screamed, the men stormed, and all were as much frightened as if they were being deprived for ever of their liberty; and not a few even went the length of thinking that the steamer had become unmanageable, and was actually running away with them to Heaven knows where!

After passing on one side the navigable river Dombrovieza, upon which Bucharest, the capital of Wallachia, is situated, and Turtukai on the other, a very considerable commercial town in Bulgaria, we cast anchor before Silistria, a fortified town, distinguished during the late war between the Russians and Turks. It is now in a most ruinous state, but, being ornamented with the swelling mosque and graceful minaret, forms a pleasing feature in the landscape.

The fortifications, still manned by Russian* soldiers, consist of long weak curtains, with a few miserable bastions, badly planned and worse built, forming altogether a most inefficient defence against the well-directed attack of an enemy. Indeed the more minutely we examine the fortifications of Silistria, the more we must

* Since this voyage was made, the Russian troops have evacuated the fortress.

appreciate the bravery of the twelve thousand gallant Turks that held this place for nine months against an overwhelming force of fifty thousand Russians, furnished with every material necessary for carrying on a most murderous siege.

The steam-engine requiring some slight repair, we again cast anchor about half-way between Silistria and Hirsova. Here the Danube becomes so broad, that while coasting on the Bulgarian side, Wallachia opposite was scarcely visible.

The banks now became exceedingly marshy, and I would beg permission to counsel the traveller, who values either skin, sleep, or comfort, not to journey down this part of the Danube without a musquito net, as he is certain of being assailed by myriads of musquitoes and sand-flies, to say nothing of the hornets; by these I was attacked, sometimes alternately, sometimes in conjunction. But it is during the night that the musquitoes are most troublesome; then we found them so numerous as frequently to extinguish the lights in the cabin: no contrivance on our part could prevent their attack, so insatiate is their thirst for blood. Tormented by them, and the hot pestilential air of the cabin, I sought the deck, where I was obliged to pass the night whistling to the winds, and watching the stars, sleep being completely out of the question. This

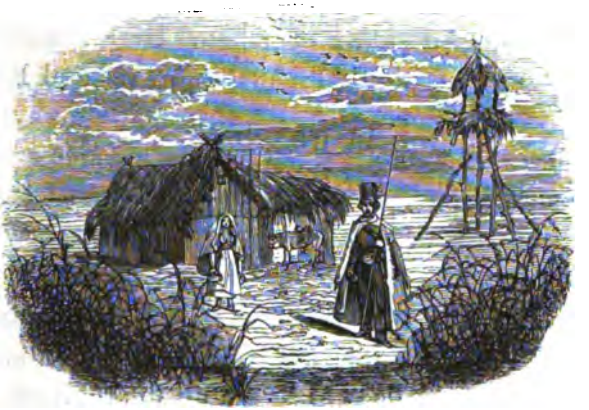
most redundant insect population are, no doubt, engendered by the marshes which everywhere abound in this part of the Danube; and that nothing may be wanting to complete the plagues of poor humanity, it is said that the intermittent fever, another offspring of the swamps, is very likely to be the fate of him who exposes himself to the night air by sleeping on deck.

The next morning we continued our route; and such was the rapidity of the stream, that even without the assistance of the engine we were hurried forward with astonishing velocity till we came to Hirsova, which I visited while the engine was repairing. I found it to be miserable in the extreme, every house being built of mud, with the exception of the mosque, a very tolerable edifice. Hirsova was, however, a very considerable town before its destruction by the Russians, who, the Turks told us, did not leave a single house standing. It is prettily situated on a series of undulating eminences, which rise in projecting rocks close to the river, appearing in every respect admirably adapted for a fortified town.

I ascended the projecting rock on which the citadel formerly stood, and although now a heap of stones, still it had the honour of resisting the siege of the Russians for two months. I enjoyed from its summit a very extensive prospect over

the vast plains of Wallachia and a great part of Bulgaria, to the far distant chain of Mount Hæmus. But how melancholy was the scene before me! Throughout the whole of that immense district, notwithstanding it has the advantages of a fine climate and fertile soil adapted to every production, there was not a single object to delight the eye and gladden the heart. Here were no smiling towns and villages with their rural population, the pride of every country; and had it not been for a few scattered huts, with here and there a flock of sheep and a herd of buffaloes, it might be called a desert.

The whole of the inhabitants of these beautiful but benighted provinces, with the exception of a few towns on the Danube, are principally Christians of the Greek church, and justly extolled by travellers for their industrious peaceable habits, particularly the Bulgarians, who are a pastoral people. Yet, so oppressive has been the long rule of the Ottoman government, and so protracted the devastating wars, that the people have gradually relapsed into semi-barbarism, and the country has become so depopulated, that the pelican of the wilderness everywhere finds an undisturbed habitation, and the eagles are so numerous as to have been our companions during the whole of our voyage down the Danube, from Pest to the Black Sea.



COSSACK GUARD-HOUSE AND WATCH-TOWER.

LETTER IX.

GALATZ—MISERABLE ASPECT OF THE TOWN—INCREASING COMMERCE—INHABITANTS—DEPARTURE FOR CONSTANTINOPLE—PASSENGERS—GERMAN STUDENTS—HUNGARIAN NOBLEMAN—BESSARABIA—DELTA OF THE DANUBE—COSSACK GUARD-HOUSES—INSALUBRITY OF THEIR SITUATION—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The hills, whose ever-varying beauty had delighted us from the time we left Belgrade, now melted into a monotonous plain; and we passed onward through an expanse of water, resembling a sea studded with innumerable islets. In the far distance we again caught a glimpse of Mount Hæmus, which became more distinctly developed as we approached Braila, a commercial town of

some importance in Wallachia. Here I was not more surprised than pleased to see several English vessels in its little port, and our flag waving from a height in the town.

Shortly after leaving Braila, we passed the river Szereth, which divides Moldavia from Wallachia; and in about an hour cast anchor at Galatz, the most commercial town in Moldavia, containing, it is said, twenty thousand inhabitants; but advancing no higher claims to architectural beauty than those I have already described.

The citizens have, however, made one step towards improvement, by paving one or two of the principal streets with boards, like some of the alpine villages in the Tyrol. Still, there is neither inn nor house of public entertainment in the whole town, except a coffee-house. As to beds, they are considered most unnecessary articles of furniture, a divan covered with leather, or a straw mattress laid on the floor, being the only substitute: nor were the inhabitants more attentive to their personal appearance than their comforts, soap and water being evidently as great strangers to their persons, as combs to their matted locks; and the sheep-skin jacket was the universal habiliment of the peasant.

Notwithstanding these repulsive features, still some signs of improvement were visible; there

was an air of animation in the port, and a few pretty villas were being built on the heights: Galatz in these respects differing widely from those sluggish towns we had hitherto visited. This was further evidenced by the appearance of several vessels lying in the river, including two Austrian steam-boats, the *Argo* and the *Ferdinando Primo:* the latter, a very fine vessel, journeys between this port and Constantinople. Here I had again the pleasure of seeing several English vessels, and here we have also a vice-consul; but, strange to say, he was a foreigner, and spoke no language but his native Italian; much to the annoyance of the English merchants and traders. The articles principally exported from Galatz are timber, wool, tallow, hides, wax, honey, flax, hemp, corn, including nearly all the raw materials usually found in such a latitude; and as these provinces are completely destitute of manufactures, the trade is most profitable to the merchant, and daily increasing.

In wandering through the town, I was more pleased with the aspect of the inhabitants than of their dwellings, as they formed a variety of groups at once picturesque and interesting. In one place, under the verandah of a coffee-house, sat a crowd of Turks, languidly smoking the tchibouque: in another were to be seen, sauntering along the

beach, a long range of most primitive-looking carriages, driven by Jews, Turks, Greeks, or Moldavians, in their respective costumes, and attended by bare-legged footmen. Here the awkward military were attempting to perform their European evolutions; and a stranger, on observing them, might deem they were afraid of gunpowder, as they never fired a salute without first making the sign of the cross on their foreheads. There Jews, in their long vestments and high fur caps, were selling their flimsy wares, at a profit of cent. per cent., to the crew of an English vessel just released from quarantine; and, to complete the picture, hundreds of men and boys were breasting the silvery current of the river, unencumbered with the superfluity of bathing-dresses, beneath the eyes of numbers of fair ladies, who nevertheless seemed to regard the matter with the most perfect nonchalance.

After remaining two days at Galatz, I embarked in the *Ferdinando* steam-packet, Captain Everson, for Constantinople. Here I found, much to my gratification, two of my countrymen among the passengers,—Captain Johnson, of the East India Company's service, and Mr. Newton: in the latter I had the pleasure of recognising an old travelling acquaintance. We had also a Hungarian nobleman, and a considerable sprinkling of

German students; these were *deck-passengers*, for which they only paid a few florins; and if they had been bound for the Indies, they could not have laid in a more ample stock of provisions: true it is, they were about to embark on the Black Sea, which, to a German who had never even beheld salt water, appeared an enterprise of no common importance. In genuine patriarchal style they feasted upon the common store, while their continued vocal efforts gave to our vessel the semblance of a beer-shop: several were fashionably dressed, with tremendous spurs dangling at their heels; and thus, whip in hand, each strutted up and down the deck with as much consequence as a seignior of a thousand acres. In short, they were a most noisy, ill-behaved set of young men, between whom and the captain there was open war from the moment they entered the vessel; for, much to the annoyance of the cabin-passengers, they struggled to obtain exclusive possession of the deck, maintaining, to the very letter, that it was their right as *deck-passengers*. At one time the contest assumed an air of gravity, until the captain, an intelligent, active seaman, threatened to lower the boat and put them ashore: this, together, with a few friendly remonstrances addressed to them on my part, at length convinced them of their folly; for, being the only Englishman on board that

spoke German, I was obliged to perform the disagreeable office of dragoman.

Among our cabin-passengers, the brave Magyar was the most original in his manners. He was in the prime of life, full of fire and animation, with not a little of the assured confidence of a man accustomed to command; he was a complete horror to our refined countrymen, whose every word and gesture was studied, and whose conversation was carried on in a *sotto voce* tone, certainly not intended to communicate with those whose auricular organs were in the slightest degree disordered. In direct opposition to this, every sentence uttered by our Hungarian friend was in a voice so pitched in *alto*, as to resemble that of a seaman in a storm. In addition to this sin against good manners, he used his fork for a tooth-pick, and expectorated much too freely on the floor, and never thought it necessary to listen to any other conversation than his own; which flowed on in one continued stream, most unfortunately for his hearers, for he was a man of limited information, though he conceived himself to be a living encyclopedia, and competent to discuss every subject. This partly resulted from his high station in his own country, where he was a "doctor of laws and philosophy," and also a seignior of two or three most unpronounceable lordships: still, notwithstanding these

foibles, he was a truly estimable man, honest in his principles, and an excellent travelling companion.

On arriving at the Pruth, which forms the boundary between Bessarabia and Moldavia, we perceive the town of Reni, or Timorava. Here the possessions of Russia commence; and a little lower down, at Kartal, opposite the Bulgarian fortress Isakscha, is the fatal spot where the armies of that power were accustomed to throw over a bridge of boats, when about to invade the Turkish territory: a situation well adapted to that purpose, owing to the number of islands and the contracted bed of the river. On passing the great lake Jalburg, Ismael becomes visible. This town, called by the Turks Smir, is also famous in the history of the wars between Russia and Turkey. Suwarrow took it in 1789 by storm, and, not contented with delivering up the ill-fated city to be plundered by an infuriated soldiery, reduced nearly the whole of the town to ashes, and massacred, according to the Turkish accounts, twenty thousand of the inhabitants. Thus, from being one of the most beautiful and commercial towns in the Ottoman empire, adorned with palaces and mosques, and a population of thirty thousand, Ismael has now become of so little importance as scarcely to deserve mention.

A short distance from Ismael commences what is termed the Delta of the Danube, a perfect sea thickly studded with islands, extending for leagues in every direction. These islands are for the most part swampy, with little or no vegetation save bulrushes: as to cultivation, there is none, being literally a desolation of desolation. Here, also, the river divides itself into the various arms which discharge this vast body of water into the Black Sea. The number of these varies according to different accounts; some give them at seven, while others limit them to five. For myself, I should be inclined to confine them to four; as that arm of the river which runs into the Ramsin lake, although it empties its waters into the sea in three different places, can in reality only be considered as one. Plinius estimated them at six, which agrees with the Turkish calculation, from whom they have also received their present appellation.

We took the channel called Suline Bogasi, which is that generally used by mariners, and considered to be the principal stream; and, according to the late Russian treaty with the Ottoman Porte, *it was agreed that the centre of this arm of the Danube should form for the future the boundary line between the two empires, each reserving to itself the right of navigation.*

Our voyage from Galatz to the Black Sea was

anything but agreeable: the banks were everywhere marshy, especially below the Pruth; and as a consequence, the musquitoes and hornet-flies were multiplied tenfold. Still, however favourable the swamps might have been to the increase of our tiny tormentors, they were most deleterious to the health of man: this was sadly evidenced in the bloated countenances of the wretched Cossacks, doomed to guard the Russian frontier in this part of the empire. But as we rushed forward by the aid of steam, and a current computed to run at a rate of twenty thousand feet in an hour, we experienced no other inconvenience from the climate than a little annoyance from our insect enemies.

Notwithstanding these petty *désagrémens*, still, taken altogether, I have seldom performed a tour which afforded me more real pleasure, nor one that offered scenes of such varied interest, whether we regard the beauty of the scenery, the striking diversity of features exhibited by the different provinces, together with the primitive state of the inhabitants; the whole passing in review as if in a panorama. Nor must I forget to mention, that the whole expense attending the voyage amounted to no more than about eleven pounds. This sum, be it remembered, does not include the expenses of the table, which must always be regulated

according to the inclinations of the traveller. With respect to the time occupied, were it not for the vexatious detentions of the passengers by the Austrian authorities in signing passports, together with the ill-planned arrangements of the directors, the tourist might leave Vienna and arrive at Constantinople with the greatest ease in eight days, casting anchor each night about sunset. However, as things are at present constituted, he may consider himself well off, if he is able to accomplish the voyage in twelve days. But even this rate of travelling is considered by the natives of these provinces equal to the speed of an air-balloon; so different is the value of time where the absence of commercial and manufacturing employments leaves the mass of the population to the enjoyment of more idleness than wealth. So now farewell to the Danube: my next letter will, I trust, inform you of my arrival in the capital of the Ottoman empire.

Adieu.

LETTER X.

ENTRANCE INTO THE BLACK SEA—OBSERVATIONS RESPECTING IT—STORM—GERMAN TERROR—LANDING AT VARNA—FORTIFICATIONS—THRACIAN BOSPHORUS—COMPARISON BETWEEN THE BAY OF NAPLES AND STAMBOUL.

THE distant prospect of the Black Sea was regarded by all on board with unmingled satisfaction, if for nothing else than the hope it engendered that we should be delivered from our insect enemies. We were hailed at the mouth of the Danube by a Russian officer of the quarantine, who proved to be an Englishman, the son of a Mr. Carruthers, formerly a merchant at Odessa. Here it was that the Russians intended to impose a toll upon all foreign vessels navigating between the Black Sea and the Danube: an intention, however, which a little well-timed remonstrance by English firmness, and a little prudent reflection on their own part, induced them to abandon, at least for the present; but as they are diligently employed in erecting a quarantine establishment, which will be followed in all probabi-

lity by a town, futurity will tell whether or not their moderation will be persisted in.

Our papers having been found perfectly correct, we were allowed to pass the Russian guard-house, and to our great satisfaction entered the Euxine. This vast expanse of water, now become of the most vital importance to the whole commercial and political world, is about two hundred and three leagues in length; and its greatest breadth, on the meridian of 31° east, a hundred and ten leagues. The Turks call it Kara-denghis, and the Russians Tschernomore (Black Sea). This appellation is presumed to have been given in consequence of the frequent occurrence of thick black fogs, caused by the surrounding mountains intercepting the vapours when they arise from its surface.

Owing to the prodigious quantity of fresh water poured into the Euxine from its numerous tributaries, the water is rather brackish than salt; hence it freezes with a moderate degree of cold, and in severe winters the whole of the northern coast, more especially that near Odessa, presents one vast field of ice.

The navigation of this sea is also attended with some inconvenience to small vessels, on account of its being continually fed by some of the noblest rivers in Europe, which produce

violent currents, particularly during the early months of summer, when they are increased in volume by the melting of the snow. That caused by the Danube was now most observable, our vessel being hurried forward with extreme velocity; while the noble stream, which had so long borne us continued to preserve its yellow turbid character for an immense distance, as it rolled through the clear, dark-blue waters of the sea. When a strong wind directs its force against these currents, a short "chopping sea" ensues, still more dangerous to the safety of small or ill-built vessels.

It must also be observed, that when a vessel during a strong gale is unable to lie-to, or obliged to run before the wind, or, through the ignorance of her commander, finds it impossible to make a port, she runs some danger of being wrecked; for, though the sea itself presents no object to jeopardise her safety, there being neither rocks, shoals, nor islands, (with the exception of Serpents' Island near Odessa,) yet the high rocky shore offers an aspect full of peril, particularly on the coast of the Crimea and Circassia. These lofty crags also form another source of danger to the mariner, by attracting thunder-storms, which occasionally rage here with great violence: and destiny decided that one of the wildest fury should

now threaten our bark with destruction; for though the *Ferdinando* was a fine vessel, of a hundred-horse power, and commanded by an Englishman, an experienced navigator, still she found it difficult to come off victorious in her struggle against the elements without sustaining some loss.

The sea heaved fearfully, the watery mountains rolled over each other in rapid succession, the fiery lightning darted through the dark, wild clouds, accompanied by tremendous peals of thunder, and the howling wind drove our vessel like a feather through the surge; it was, in truth, a glorious spectacle, and made a deep impression upon our Hungarian traveller and the German students, who now admired, for the first time, the grandeur of a sea-storm.

Their admiration was, however, quickly converted into fear, when they beheld the steam-boat pitching first on one side and then on the other. But how is it possible to paint their horror and consternation when she first shipped water? Pale with apprehension, for one and all expected that we were immediately going to the bottom, they first invoked all the saints in the calendar to protect them, and next execrated their own folly for committing themselves to the fickle element. Drenched to the skin, and with countenances of an ashy paleness, they were to be seen, in one

part of the deck, locked in each other's arms; and in another, clinging with all their strength to a rope. While the brave Magyar, the dauntless hero of a dozen battles, and who never before knew what fear was, trembled like a leaf, and assuredly at no time embraced a fair maiden more lovingly than he now did the mast; and nothing could persuade him, every time the vessel creaked, but that she was splitting to pieces. All attempts of the captain to clear the deck of these, to him, useless lumber were unavailing; till at length the heaving billows performed upon the whole party the work of ipecacuanha, and they retreated to the cabin, having then become careless whether they were shipwrecked or not.

The wind having abated, we soon reached Varna, where we remained about half an hour. This is now a miserable town, everywhere bearing marks, in its half-ruined citadel and dilapidated fortifications, of the severe and protracted siege it sustained by the Russians. Being built at the confluence of several small rivers, or rather extensive marshes, it is not considered healthy; but owing to its situation, if properly fortified and well defended, Varna might prove a strong bulwark against an invading army.

There are several works in progress, consisting of the usual long line of unprotected curtains,

with a few bastions that we see in most of the Turkish fortifications, without any outwork or covered way of any description, except a narrow ditch, leaving half the escarp wall exposed on every side. You are, perhaps, not aware that this fortress, notwithstanding the bombastic accounts we heard of its capture by the Russians, was sold by that execrable monster Usef Pacha, who afterwards took refuge in Russia; and although he was condemned to death as a traitor on the clearest evidence, yet the poor Sultan, at the command of the Emperor Nicholas, was not only compelled to pardon, but invest him with the government of Belgrade! Thus much for the independence of our most faithful and ancient ally.

On leaving Varna, the coast of the Black Sea became highly interesting. The great ridge of the Balkan mountains was already distinctly developed on the distant horizon; and the shelving hills, diversified by woods, valleys, bays, and promontories, formed a variety of beautiful landscapes; to which the primitive looking Turkish sailing-boats, with the gaudy turbans of the sailors, as they skimmed over the tranquil sea, contributed no small degree of novelty and picturesque effect.

In hazy weather, vessels generally sail near the Bulgarian coast, having for landmarks Cape Kaliakri, and on the eastern side the lofty mountains

called the Deux Mamelles; valuable to the mariner, for it rarely happens that any fog is sufficiently dense to obscure them, and in clear weather they are distinctly seen at a distance of thirty English miles.

About an hour before daylight, the lighthouses at the entrance of the Bosphorus were visible; but both burned so dimly, that, although we could not have been more than five or six miles distant, it was scarcely possible to distinguish the lamps. That upon the European side, Roumelie Phener, standing upon the ancient Promontorium Panium, is defended by a castle, beneath which is a group of rocks with the remains of an altar, said to have been built by the Romans, and dedicated to Augustus. The Asiatic, or Anadolian lighthouse, called Phenes Bachtchesi, is also defended by a fort: this mean building was even worse lighted than its companion in Europe.

As the day dawned, the lovely scenery upon the banks of this justly-celebrated channel burst upon our view. The sun beamed forth with a splendour only known in such a highly-favoured latitude, illuminating with a stream of rosy light a succession of the most lovely pictures that can be imagined. However, it is not my intention, in this travelling age, to sing the charms of the Bosphorus—charms that have already been

chanted by the poets of every land and every tongue. Let it suffice, that the artist who would paint all that is picturesque in the loveliest forms of art and nature, has only to study its fairy scenery and smiling shores, studded with oriental palaces, graceful chiosks, and swelling domes, mingling their varied outlines with the rich foliage of a thousand trees. All this you will readily imagine; consequently it cannot be necessary for me to fatigue your attention with a lengthened description.

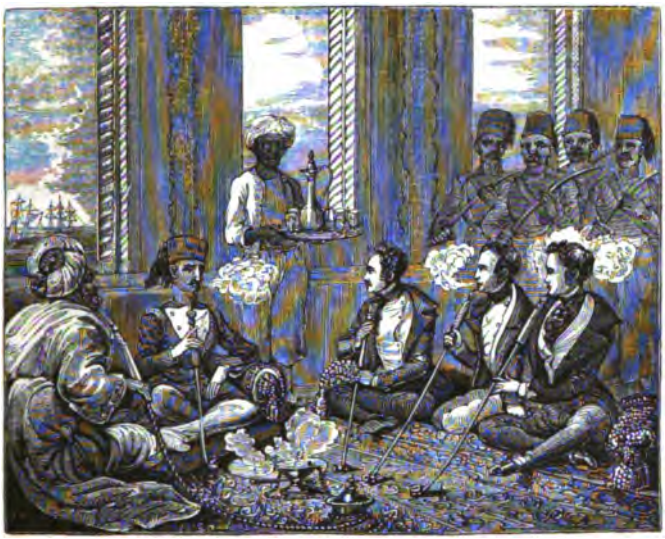
Most travellers, on arriving here, establish comparisons, according to individual taste, between the beautiful situation of Stamboul and its rivals in loveliness,—the delightful bay of Naples, and the proud amphitheatre of Genoa. My fellow-travellers, Captain Johnson and Mr. Newton, had, like myself, extended their rambles far and wide, and the latter resided for many years in Naples. A warfare of words, therefore, arose among us with respect to the comparative beauties of the bright gem of Italy, and the equally brilliant jewel of the Bosphorus. In common with most travellers, my companions, on the first coup-d'œil, awarded the preference to the crescent-crowned city of the Osmanlis; which is not surprising, for it is impossible to behold that glorious waving mountain-outline, that amphitheatre of splendid

oriental edifices, rendered even more picturesque by the defects in their architecture, without admiration. Nor is this all; for the splendour of the panorama was at that moment heightened by the aspect of the mirrored city in the clear blue waters of the Golden Horn, and the myriads of graceful *caïks* darting in every direction with the swiftness of arrows over its crystal bosom.

Notwithstanding, however, all these fascinating objects, my suffrage was unhesitatingly given in favour of my old friend the bay of Naples; perhaps, after all, owing to its being connected with many delightful associations of early life. Still, the effect of Stamboul depends in a great measure upon art, on the novel and graceful architecture of its mosques, minarets, and gay-coloured chiosks, mingling, in all their various and picturesque forms, with the dark outline of groves of cypresses and plane trees. Annihilate these, and half the charms of the picture would be destroyed: while the beauty of the bay of Naples, with its sublime combinations of scenery, hill, mountain, vale, and sea, would remain uninjured, were its proud city, suburban villas, and mountain monasteries laid in ruins. Besides, in whatever direction you journey in the neighbourhood of Naples, whether through its champaign country or mountain districts, skirting along the shores of its bay, or

watching the curling vapours of Vesuvius, it is impossible not to confess the witchery of the scene. Whereas, when contemplating Stamboul, we are obliged to recognise, as the sublimest features, the gently-elevated hills of Europe and Asia on the Bosphorus; the distant mountains of Thrace being neither sufficiently lofty nor picturesque: and, be it remembered, in order to obtain a view of the classical Olympus, you are obliged to leave Stamboul and the magical shores of the Golden Horn.

However, we may as well conclude a truce with criticism on the relative beauties of the two capitals; for though a traveller may be influenced by taste or prejudice in favour of one or the other, it is impossible to bring them fairly into comparison,—the oriental pomp and general novelty of the eastern metropolis amply counterbalancing whatever advantages its Italian rival may possess in the magnificent bay and scenery by which it is surrounded. But whatever may be our bias with regard to the City of the Sultan, the present aspects of the political horizon invest it with peculiar interest; as it will, in all probability, be the arena on which the struggle for European supremacy will be contested.



GIAOURS SMOKING THE TCHIBOUQUE WITH THE PACHA OF THE DARDANELLES.

LETTER XI.

DEPARTURE FOR THE DARDANELLES—INCREASE OF PASSENGERS—A PACHA—HIS HAREM AND SUITE—VISIT TO THE PACHA OF THE DARDANELLES—MOULLAH—ORIENTAL ENTERTAINMENT—HALL OF AUDIENCE—THE ADVANTAGES OF A TESKERE.

THIS time I was obliged to content myself with merely a glance at the fair city of Constantine, in consequence of our steam-boat having been engaged to convey the Pacha of the Dardanelles, his harem and suite, to his new residence, the castle at Chanak-kalesi, on the Dardanelles. Our Osmanli grandee, whose movements were at once

active and bustling—characteristics that rarely distinguish a Mussulman of the present day, proved to be a fine, bluff, healthy-looking man, something in the style of an English squire who had been accustomed from his youth to brush the dew from the grass at break of day, while pursuing the pleasures of the chase. His manners were dignified, as those of a Turk in authority always are. Nevertheless, he was more communicative, and exhibited a much nearer approach to good-humoured cordiality, than we usually find in so great and grave a personage as one, who is at the same time a Mir-miran and a Pacha of two tails.

With the exception of the red cap and blue tassel, which is now almost universally the head-dress worn by Turks of every class, he was attired, together with the officers of his suite, completely in the European military costume. These, together with the attendants and a harem, consisting of ten ladies, formed a cortège of about fifty persons. The women, as usual, were most hermetically veiled, no part of the face being visible except the eyes; and that they might not be exposed to the slightest observation, the sky-light of the cabin was kept continually covered, while guards with drawn swords were placed at the door, and on the steps leading to it.

On arriving at the chateau of the Dardanelles,

Boreas appeared to have had some especial spite against the chief of these formidable straits, our friend the Pacha; for when it became necessary that the fair prisoners should ascend to the deck, preparatory to leaving the vessel, he blew such a gust, that not only their veils, but tresses floated in the breeze, in spite of the most indefatigable efforts of the eunuchs to keep the rebellious muslin in decent order. Hence I had a most favourable opportunity of deciding that the countenances of the greater number of the ladies were not particularly handsome,—except one, whom we understood to be the principal wife of the Pacha. She was, indeed, a lovely woman, about eighteen, with fine dark eyes, black hair, and features cast in the finest mould; but her complexion being excessively pallid, they wore an expression of great tristesse, most probably the effect of the strict confinement to which the women of the East are universally subject.

Upon leaving the packet, the Pacha invited Captain Johnson, Mr. Newton, and myself, to take coffee and smoke a pipe with him at his chateau. After threading our way through an awkward squad of young tacticoes, we entered a vast antechamber filled with the attendants, who were drawn up in military array to receive us: these were the keff-jis, tchibouque-jis, and toutoon-jis

of his excellency, a motley tribe, black, white, and brown. We then passed into a spacious saloon, where the great man was seated on a rich divan, close to the window, enjoying the cool sea-breeze. The spiritual monitor, the moullah, sat beside him, indolent and heavy-looking as a camel; and though I intend no disrespect to the priesthood, I cannot help saying that he was one of the most unprepossessing men I ever beheld, his cadaverous countenance exhibiting a mingled expression of malignity, ferocity, and fanaticism. He was, in fact, a personification of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, seated in the most inappropriate juxtaposition with the god of good cheer; for the Pacha was the beau-ideal, in appearance, of good fellows.

On entering, we made our salutations *à la Turque*, which the inveteracy of European habits rendered somewhat difficult: however, as we were already in some degree familiar with these essential observances in oriental manners, we did not perpetrate any remarkable gaucheries. The Pacha, in return, broke through the line of demarcation between the Mussulman and the Giaour; for he arose, and made as near an approach to a smile as his sense of the dignity of a Pacha would permit, and politely motioned us to be seated.

After a decorous lapse of time had intervened, and exactly at the moment prescribed by etiquette, our host, through the medium of the dragoman, bade us welcome. Then came another interval of silence, for, be it remembered, the high rank of a Pacha will not permit him to chatter incessantly. This pause continued till the darling tchibouque, the beloved friend of the Turk, the substitute for mirthful conversation in visits intended to be gay, and the welcome filler-up of pauses in those intended to be ceremonious, made their appearance. These were presented in due ceremony by the proper officer, the tchibouque-ji, who crossed his hands on his breast and knelt on one knee as he introduced, with a neat little pair of silver tongs, the *atesh* (fire) into the bowl: when the important ceremony of ignition was concluded, he made another salutation and retired. The pipes were really splendid, of the purest Turkish cherry or jessamine, with superb amber mouth-pieces. In short, their length and magnificence were befitting the state of a Pacha.

The coffee followed, with was served on a gold tray by four herculean slaves as black as ebony, who knelt on presenting it; and then retired to a corner of the room, where they remained like statues till we had finished. The fragrant fluid, which was so excellent that a teaspoonful

might be diluted into a quart in England, was poured into cups of the finest porcelain, each reposing in an external cup of pure gold, prettily pierced and filigraned.

When we had taken coffee, conversation commenced. The Pacha expressed a hope, that the differences which had just arisen between England and the Porte, respecting the unfortunate affair of Mr. Churchill, would be speedily and amicably arranged ; and also, that the alliances between the two governments might be cemented more closely. To this, of course, we made suitable replies, and, after a few additional observations by our host, another hiatus ensued in the conversation ; but at this time it was of such an unreasonable length, that we made some slight demonstrations of our intention to depart.

At this moment a second party of slaves entered, carrying a massive silver tray filled with confectionery : these were followed by two others, one bearing a silver-mounted bottle containing perfumed water, and the other swinging by a chain, in the same manner as the sacristans in the Catholic churches, a silver filigree censer, from whose apertures issued the most agreeable aromatic vapours. One of our party, whose olfactory nerves were not accustomed to this stimulus, unfortunately broke out into a violent

fit of sneezing, which sadly disconcerted his gravity, and absolutely curled the mouth of the Pacha into something that might be construed as a smile. Having, therefore, received all the honours prescribed by oriental politeness, we departed, highly gratified with the urbanity of our host, and his courteous reception.

I shall now give you a slight description of what, perhaps, we may call the hall of audience, and which may serve for every other to which I may have occasion to introduce you, for they are nearly all similar in their appointments. The walls were painted a light green, and the floor covered with a superior species of matting, here called Egyptian.* As to furniture, there was none, unless we extend that appellation to a boarded seat, raised about fifteen inches from the floor, and carried around three sides of the room; this, covered by fine woollen cloth, and supplied with an abundance of cushions, bears the name of divan, and forms no bad substitute for a sofa to him who would take a siesta, or smoke a tchibouque.

An Arabic inscription was painted in black letters over the door, to preserve the inmates

* Most probably made in Circassia, as I subsequently met with a similar description of matting in that country, from whence it is exported in large quantities to Turkey.

from the evil eye; and a few verses from the Korân ornamented the walls. The whole taste and ingenuity were expended on the ceiling, which was curiously wrought in tessellated woodwork; and being evidently recently painted in blue and gold, in the arabesque style, had a very pretty effect.

I had almost forgotten to mention, that my kind host, finding I was about to extend my travels through the neighbouring provinces, furnished me with a *teskeré*, which he said would everywhere insure me, not only a hospitable reception from the Osmanlis, but horses for travelling; and by presenting it to the aghas of every town and village, it would oblige them to procure me a night's quarter, provisions, &c.—a document of no little value, when we remember that, with the exception of the capital and a few of the large commercial towns, there is not a single hotel or inn, for the accommodation of the traveller, to be found in the Turkish empire; for that uncomfortable substitute, yclept a khan, ministers in no other way to the necessities of the tourist, than to afford shelter from the inclemencies of the weather.

LETTER XII.

CHANAK-KALESI—JOURNEY TO TROY—TURKISH HORSES—HUNGARIAN TRAVELLING COMPANION—VISIT TO OUR CONSUL, MR. LANDOR—ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY—APATHY OF THE TURKS—SERIOUS INDISPOSITION OF MY COMPANION—KNAVISH SURIDJI—SCAMANDER—BOURNARBASHI—HOUSE OF THE AGHA—MOONLIGHT PHANTOMS—HOSPITABLE RECEPTION—HUNGARIAN REMEDY FOR INTERMITTENT FEVER—COURTESY OF THE AGHA—SITE OF TROY—PROSPECT FROM THE TOMB OF HECTOR.

In my last letter, I mentioned our arrival at the castles of the Dardanelles. We landed at the town, (called by the Turks Chanak-Kalesi, from its potteries,) which clusters about the castle on the right shore: this, like every other I had seen in Turkey, was a filthy congregation of narrow lanes and pestilential alleys. It is, however, a great resort for shipping, as vessels are often detained in this port for several months by contrary winds; and I cannot but think that a few towing steam-boats stationed here would find constant employment, and prove a lucrative speculation.

While our horses were preparing, we inspected the curiosities of the town, a most meagre collection. The variety of costumes and features exhibited by the Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Franks, and Jews, amused us for a time; but that soon passed away, and we became tired of observing a melange of people, who, however they might differ in other respects, agreed in sitting more than half the day upon carpets, smoking the eternal tchibouque. We had not even the pleasure of finding our own consul; for in the late conflagration, that laid more than half the town in ashes, his dwelling was also included, which obliged him to take up his temporary residence at a village a few miles distant.

My two countrymen and the Hungarian, to whom I before alluded, entertained, like myself, the intention of visiting the site of Troy. But when the wretched hacks of horses made their appearance, the courage of the party sank to Zero, —no doubt partly influenced by the feverish heat at which the thermometer then stood; and of our little party, the brave Magyar alone consented to bear me company. Indeed, the pommels of the Turkish saddles, the jolting trot of the horses, and the intermittent fever of Asia Minor, might well deter any man who valued his comfort and health, from undertaking the expedition: how-

ever, my curiosity and natural buoyancy of spirit overcame every consideration. Behold me, therefore, mounted on a saddle as broad as a cradle, with two loops of ropes for stirrups; and these so short, that my knees nearly reach my chin.

We were accompanied by a young Israelite, who acted the part of a dragoman and suridji; and as the Magyar wore his half-military costume, with a brace of silver-mounted pistols in his girdle and a sabre by his side, we presented to the wondering eyes of the Osmanlis rather a warlike appearance. This was probably the reason, together with the humiliated feeling produced among the people by the late successes of the christian arms, that instead of being pelted with stones, too often the fate of former travellers, we were saluted with nothing worse than a few grins and hisses from the women and children.

Our route for several hours lay along the sandy coast of the Dardanelles, and at every breeze that blew, the mobile dust transferred itself into mouths, eyes, and ears: add to which, the scorching sun drank up all the moisture of our frames. Vain was every attempt we made to allay our thirst; but fortunately, when at its height, we arrived at the residence of our consul, Mr. Landor, who, with true English hospitality,

welcomed us to an excellent dinner; and those only who have been placed in similar circumstances, can estimate the boon at its full value. Our host, who had resided in this part of Turkey several years, amused us with a variety of anecdotes of the people, to whom he appeared much attached: he represented them as extremely well conducted, crime very rarely occurring, notwithstanding they are only a few degrees removed from barbarism, and left almost entirely to their own guidance. Their system of police is similar to that I have before described as established by Prince Milosch in Servia.

After leaving the friendly roof of my kind countryman, we soon lost sight of the sea, and journeyed onward through a most romantic country. In one place we wandered through a narrow valley, bounded by gently swelling hills, clothed to their summits with luxuriant grass or odoriferous shrubs; then, again, cantered over a level sward, a perfect carpet of green velvet enamelled with a thousand flowers, whose balmy fragrance in some degree rendered endurable the scorching rays of the sun. Numerous little fountains babbled down the slopes, and then meandered through tiny vales, on their way to swell a more considerable stream: nature offering to the indolent inhabitants the means of extensive irrigation,

of which any people but the benighted Turks would most gladly avail themselves.

In every direction was to be seen the finest land, if properly cultivated sufficient for the support of a dense population; and numerous picturesque sites, on which a hundred towns and villages might be erected. But, alas! what did we find? Solitude and desolation. Every step proclaimed the benumbing rule of the Osmanlis, and the few wretched inhabitants we encountered wore the stamp of poverty, degradation, and the most abject slavery. In short, the whole of the scattered huts we passed in our route from Chanak-Kalesi on the Dardanelles to Troy would, if collected together, scarcely form a moderately-sized village, and the fertile soil itself appeared as much accursed, as if the lovely heavens had showered down pestilence.

With the exception of an hour spent with Mr. Landor, we passed the greater part of the day on horseback, and, either from fatigue or the great heat, my companion was excessively languid, and towards evening displayed every symptom of severe indisposition: writhing with pain, and faint with debility, he would gladly have lain down in the fields in preference to continuing his route. Hence, in consequence of the snail-like pace at

which we moved forward, we did not arrive at the Scamander till it was quite dark; and, to add to our annoyances, we found the river so swollen by the late rains, that our suridji declared he would not ford it, as he should certainly risk the loss of his horses.

Now, as the glimmering lights of the little town of Bournarbashi were distinctly visible on the opposite side of the river, and evidently at no greater distance than a quarter of a mile, the intelligence, to an exhausted invalid and a hungry man, was certainly anything but gratifying. Feeling, however, assured that the object of our knavish guide was to extort money, and being equally confident that I could swim across a much broader river, even if it was too deep to ford, I resolved upon making the experiment. I therefore sought a spot marked by the tracks of horses' hoofs, which would indicate that the natives were accustomed to use it; for remember that this country is entirely destitute of any road, save those made by the Romans. I soon met with the desired passage, when I dashed into the stream, and found, thanks to the taste of the Turks for short stirrups, that I should reach the opposite shore perfectly dry. My companion mustered courage enough to follow my example;

but, alas ! by the time we reached Bournarbashi, the stars were twinkling in the heavens, instead of the lights in the windows.

We rode to the house of the agha, to which we had been recommended by the consul, Mr. Landor. However, as these primitive people had resigned themselves to repose soon after sunset, we found the whole of the inmates in the land of dreams. Not contemplating the prospect of sleeping on the stones with any degree of satisfaction, we knocked loudly at the door ; when we received as a response the chorus of half a dozen dogs in the court-yard, and the united howl of all the curs in the town. Such an uproar could not fail to rouse the inmates from their slumbers ; but instead of popping their night-capped heads out of the windows, as would have been the case in Europe, a party of fair dames made their appearance, parading the house-top, enveloped in long flowing garments muffled to the eyes, looking precisely like so many ghosts.

The ladies immediately and peremptorily informed us that we could not be admitted, as the agha was absent. This I knew to be the common pretence made use of to get rid of strangers in Turkey ; and as the door had already given way beneath our repeated thundering, we entered, well knowing that the presence of a Giaour would soon

conjure up at least the spectre of an *agha*, however distant he might be in *propria personâ*. The plan succeeded; for the lord of the mansion and his attendants immediately made their appearance, and a comfortable supper was soon served, consisting of a fowl stewed with gourds, a pilaff, fine olives, dried fruit, and excellent bread composed of wheat and maize.

My first care was, however, devoted to my travelling-companion, who had thrown himself on the divan, absolutely writhing with suffering. Upon requesting to know what I should procure for him, he begged me to infuse a large dose of cayenne pepper in half a pint of strong wine or brandy; when, strange to say, the fiery draught acted like a charm, and restored him immediately, not only to health, but to a comparatively good appetite. This strong stimulant, the baron informed me, had cured him more than once of an intermittent fever, of which disease he felt convinced he had just suffered an incipient attack. When supper was ended, we availed ourselves of the cushions and coverings with which the divan was plentifully supplied, and soon forgot all our troubles and inconveniences.

Whether in consequence of the recommendations of our consul, or through gratitude for the douceurs we had presented to the attendants, I

cannot pretend to determine; but certain it is, the agha evinced towards us the most marked courtesy, and not only provided an excellent breakfast, but mounted his horse and accompanied us the next morning on our exploring expedition. This shows that either a decided improvement has taken place in the feeling of this people towards the Giaours, or that gold has a powerful effect in softening bigotry. At all events, it is to be hoped that future travellers, whose curiosity shall lead them to visit these countries, may, through the influence of one or the other, be allowed to pursue their way without molestation, which unfortunately has not hitherto been the case. Our agha guide pointed out the various eminences and sites which tradition and the writings of the ancients have connected with the history of Troy, with which he seemed perfectly familiar, and, for a Turk, well informed and communicative.

Before I left Troy, I rode to the extensive ruins of the Alexandrian Troy, near Eski Stamboul; visited the islands of Lesbos and Tenedos,—lands celebrated in the annals of love and art, for they were the countries of Sappho and Alcæus; bathed in the crystal stream of the Scamander, where the royal sisters of the heroic Hector washed their garments; and traced the classic Simois to its source in the mountains, from

whence I ascended Mount Ida, the abode of the gods. In short, there was not a single locality of interest, associated with the history of Troy, that I did not repeatedly visit.

Unless I were convinced that you are not one of those incredulous matter-of-fact men, who doubt the existence of everything not susceptible of demonstration, I should spare you the repetition of my feelings and impressions when I visited that classic region, and of the delight I experienced in wandering along the banks of the lovely streams that fertilise the Trojan plain. Here that city once stood which has been immortalised, not by the perishable sculptor or the crumbling column, but by the eternal verses of Homer; and although not one stone of that celebrated city now stands upon another, not one fragment of its palaces remains to tell of its grandeur, not even a trace is left of its existence, save in the writings of the ancients; yet do not these contain sufficient evidence to convince the unprejudiced mind, that on the site once occupied by the heroic Troy, the miserable village of Bournarbashi is now built?

For myself, as I most piously believe every sentence of the historical details of the Iliad, it was indeed a pleasure to link every surrounding object with some event in Trojan history, and to

recal to my imagination the glorious deeds of the great heroes of antiquity; and though the sapient pedant may pity me for revelling in delusion, yet I may equally compassionate him for being chained too closely to realities.

I went over the ground, with Homer for my guide; and if the Iliad had only been written yesterday, the site, the various mounds, eminences, and rivers, could not have been more accurately described. There is the identical plain between the Hellespont and Mount Ida's encircling chain, at whose base is situated Bournarbashi, exactly nine miles from the shore.

We also find the source of the Scamander close to the town, near the city gate of Troy, called Scean, precisely as the bard described it: besides many other corroborative circumstances, which it would be tedious to enumerate. Again, how admirably adapted was this site for that of a great city,—a fine luxuriant plain, watered by fertilising rivers communicating with the sea, and no doubt navigable for the small vessels then in use. The abundant springs of pure water, which here have their source in an immense rock, would also supply an additional inducement to the wandering tribes of old, with their flocks and herds, to select this spot on which to pitch their tents.

As a proof that the siege of Troy was not a creation of the bard of antiquity, did not Alexander the Great visit it, and offer up sacrifices to the gods on the tomb of Achilles? At a later period, did not Cæsar make a pilgrimage to this spot, hallowed by deeds of heroism? when, it is recorded, considerable remains of the city still existed; and the opinion is very generally entertained, that Alexandria Troas was principally built from the ruins of its namesake.

On an eminence above Bournarbashi stands the tomb of Hector, supposed to be the Pergamus: it is unlike every other of the tumuli found here, which consists of earth only, and may be compared to a pyramid of disjointed stones. This tomb is well worthy of a visit, were it only for the enjoyment of the superb prospect it commands over the surrounding country. The Scamander and the Simois are seen meandering through the plain beneath, bounded in the far distance by the Thracian mountains in Europe and the promontory of Segeum, now called Cape Janissary. It also includes a slight glimpse of the Hellespont, appearing like an arrowy river, together with the consecrated tumuli on its banks, occupying, according to Homer, precisely the same spot as did the camp of the Greeks during the siege of Troy. In the centre of this interesting

picture we see elevated the mound which bears the name of Ilus, and a little to the right the gigantic tomb of Cesutus; while in the back ground, towering above all, rises Mount Ida, with its snow-crowned pinnacle Gargara, from whence the gods themselves regarded with astonishment the heroic deeds of man!

LETTER XIII.

HELLESPONT—SCENERY—AUSTRIAN STEAM-BOAT—PASSENGERS—SEA OF MARMORA—ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY—FIRST IMPRESSIONS ON ARRIVING AT STAMBOUL—ITS SPLENDOUR AND POVERTY—CANINE SCAVENGERS—MELANCHOLY INSTANCE OF THEIR VORACITY—THE SUBURB GALATA—TURKISH CEMETERY—SUBURB OF PERA—GREEK BOARDING-HOUSE—ENGLISH INMATES.

THE scenery on the banks of the blue sea of Hellas fell far short of my expectations, for most of the descriptions given by travellers of its beauties are exaggerated; even the elegant lines of Byron, in his *Bride of Abydos*, are more applicable to the Bosphorus than to these scorched, half-barren shores. No doubt the tourist, on first arriving in this classic strait, is prepossessed in its favour, and regards every object through the medium with which his own imagination has invested it; for he remembers that it is immortalised, not only by the hapless lover Leander and our own delightful Byron, but the glorious exploit of 1806, when our brave mariners passed the whole of the bat-

teries in defiance of a discharge of cannon which might have sunk a navy.

If this deed of daring could then have been performed with so little danger, how much more practicable would it now be with the aid of steamboats! Besides, nothing could be easier than to capture any of the batteries by land, their whole strength being on the sea-side; and then silence the other by the guns of its opposite neighbour.

But to return to our observations on the scenery. To be sure, there is the fine rushing stream with a succession of picturesque castles bristling with cannon, the curious red-painted villas and chiosks of the Turks rising here and there in the midst of gardens blooming with orchards, olives, and vineyards, the swelling dome of the mosque and the slender white minaret mingling their graceful forms with the dark green of the towering cypress. All these are very pretty things, and novel to the European traveller; but they are not sufficient to form the sublime scenes which we had promised to our hopes.

At Chanah-Kalesi I found the Austrian steampacket, the *Maria Dorothea*, commanded by Captain Ford, a gentleman in every respect superior to most of his brethren with whom it has been my lot to travel: the officer, however, was more deserving of commendation than his vessel, which,

being only one of seventy-horse power, was too small for a sea-boat, and shipped, at the slightest breeze, quantities of water ; but, in some degree to counterbalance this inconvenience, the accommodations were extremely good.

I found the deck literally covered with passengers ; and truth to say, it required no little care so to pick my way as not to incommode them, for nearly the whole two hundred were seated, or, to use the right word, squatted on their carpets. These consisted of a melange of the different oriental tribes that we everywhere find in this country, together with a few Franks : their variety of costume was infinite, especially in the form and colour of their turbans ; for though the higher ranks and military men have renounced this mode of head-dress, yet it is still very generally retained by the mass of the population of the provinces. This motley assemblage, who would have required the pencil of a Wilkie to do them justice, were enjoying their long tchibouques, or removing from their garments certain creeping tormentors, which in warm countries are sure to be the companions of those who are not very cleanly in their persons.

Instead, however, of the ruthless slaughter I have seen perpetrated on similar occasions in Christendom, the more merciful disciple of Ma-

homet, contented with ridding himself of the nuisance, was quite careless as to the fate of his neighbour; for the little plagues were quietly placed upon the deck, and left to the full enjoyment of life and liberty. But this boon, though no doubt very agreeable to them, was not so to the few Franks on board, who regarded with dismay a process so likely to people their garments with an unwelcome population.

The Frank passengers consisted of merchants flying from the plague, which now raged with great virulence at Smyrna, a town at no time remarkable for its salubrity, from which cause probably arose the circumstance of which these gentlemen informed me: namely, that such was the malignity of the cholera when it desolated this unlucky town, that hundreds of persons were swept into eternity in five minutes after the attack of the epidemic.

Aided by steam, we overcame both the impetuosity of the current and a stiff breeze in our teeth; and gliding rapidly along, soon passed Gallipoli, now only interesting as being the fatal spot on which the Turk first planted the Crescent in Europe. We then entered the magnificent basin of the Propontis, usually called the Sea of Marmora, from the island of the same name. The country on the Asiatic side possessed a few poetic features,

but the scenery in general was neither picturesque nor romantic; and the few towns and villages were so miserable as to render the aspect still more gloomy, which was only relieved by the distant prospect of Mount Olympus, whose snowy ridge, even divested of its classical associations, formed a sublime feature in the landscape.

Indeed, everything considered, the approach to Stamboul by the sea of Marmora is far less striking than that by the Bosphorus; for it is not till we have doubled the point where the seraglio is erected, and enter the Golden Horn, that the magical panorama of the Ottoman capital bursts upon the view. The attention of the traveller is immediately arrested by its peculiarly favourable situation, appearing alike calculated to give laws to the world, or to engross its commerce. The straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, if properly fortified, and defended with only moderate courage, might bid defiance to any attack by sea; and its fine bay, the Golden Horn, sheltered from every wind, is sufficiently deep and capacious to receive the ships of every maritime nation in the world. By the same narrow channels, she commands at once the trade of the north and the south; and when the canal, now in progress to unite the Danube with the Rhine, shall be completed, the merchant of Constanti-

nople will then possess a secure medium of transit for the luxuries of the east to Hungary, Germany, and the capital of Great Britain.

Yet, though blessed with all these advantages, in addition to a climate the most delightful, and a soil producing all that can cheer life, we find the inhabitants miserable; and instead of an opulent commercial city, the poorest metropolis in the world. Never, indeed, were a people more blind to their interests than the Turks; when, by the exercise of only a moderate share of common sense and industry, they might have poured into their capital the riches of the earth. That the Russians should be desirous to establish themselves at Constantinople can be no matter of surprise; and we must almost feel astonished at the forbearance of the young emperor, when conqueror of Adrianople, that he did not march forward and secure the glorious prize, even at the hazard of a general European war.

Having contemplated for some time, with feelings of the warmest admiration, this most picturesque of all cities; having glanced from palace to seraglio; from mosque and minaret to chiosk and brightly painted summer villas; from cypress, plane, and vine-clad hills, to the mysterious recesses of Scutari's interminable cemetery, the romantic acclivities of Bulgurlu, and the

blue mountains of Asia Minor; I reluctantly stepped into the light *caïk*, and darted rapidly across the Golden Horn to Pera, the infidel suburb of proud Stamboul.

But whoever would paint the horrors of semi-barbarism in their most vivid colours, has only to land, and wade through the abominations of this den of disease. How sincerely I regretted that I could not have remained for ever in a blissful dream respecting its beauty, for all the promises held out by its external appearance were most glaringly falsified.

I found myself, on landing, in narrow unpaved streets, covered with every imaginable description of filth and dirt. Then the canine population: here thousands of lazy, mangy curs, their wolf-like aspect rendered still fiercer by hunger, lay in the middle of the streets, exactly in the spot over which the passenger must pass. These wretched animals, being considered by the Turks unclean, are left without a master or a home, their only shelter being the gateways and benches, and their only sustenance the miserable food they can find in the streets; and even this is disputed by the vultures, who hover over the town in numbers, constantly on the watch for prey.

When it happens, which is not unfrequently the case, that the dogs by their utmost industry

can only procure scanty gleanings, they send forth such loud and repeated howlings, that a Frank feels much inclined to extend towards them a wish similar to that uttered by the tender-hearted Nero for his beloved subjects. As these Stamboul plagues are infected with the true Turkish antipathy to Giaours, they seldom fail to attack every christian stranger, inflicting on some occasions the most serious injury. A melancholy instance of their ferocity is related by the inhabitants of Pera, which occurred not long since. A Frenchman, the master of a brig, having spent the evening with a friend, set out after nightfall on his return to his ship, at anchor in the port; but whether he had called to visit a friend, lost his way, or indulged too freely in the juice of the grape, is not known: certain it is, that the next morning all that remained of the miserable man were his bones and attire.

Throughout the whole of this city and its suburbs, there is nothing that deserves the name of a street, narrow lanes being their legitimate appellation. In that quarter called Galata, the great resort of the maritime population, we seldom meet with any other specimens of humanity than drunken sailors, or boys and women of the most degraded class; who may be seen issuing out of cabarets which emit such unsavoury exha-

lations, that it would be difficult to find their parallel in any other part of the world. Such are the objects that meet the vision of a stranger on his first landing.

To arrive at Pera, I was obliged to pass through the Turkish *champs des morts*, a dense grove of gloomy cypresses, crowded with white tombstones; and as these are adorned with immense turbans, they now appeared, enveloped in the shades of evening, exactly like a host of ghosts glaring from their shadowy recesses.

On entering Pera, I was somewhat relieved by the aspect of a few clean houses, and open shops filled with European manufactures. This is the principal quarter appropriated to the residence of the rich Franks, and, although the cleanest and best built of all the suburbs, is still a miserable place, and more deserves the name of a labyrinth, so totally destitute is it of the slightest pretensions to regularity. Most of the large houses look like wooden barracks, and the late fire gave the whole suburb a peculiarly desolate aspect.

Here are situated the houses, or rather sheds, of the ambassadors; for as the greater number of their mansions were burnt, they now reside at their country-houses, in the pretty villages of Therapia and Buyukderè. In this quarter we find two or three Greek and Italian inns; of these

the principal is the European hotel, but the English generally prefer residing at the pensionat of M. Giusepino, in the Strada Santa Maria. The charge is a ducat per day, which includes a very good breakfast, dinner with a bottle of wine, tea, and a sleeping-room; and when compared with the other dirty inns and lodging-houses, it cannot be too highly recommended.

I had the pleasure to find domiciliated at Giusepino's a pleasant party of English travellers, including my friend Mr. Newton, together with Colonel Considine and several British officers who had come to Constantinople in consequence of an invitation from the Turkish government, for the purpose of instructing the troops in European tactics. But unfortunately, a short time previous to their arrival, occurred the unlucky affair of Mr. Churchill, which had so materially interrupted the harmony between the Ottoman Porte and the British legation. Hence it was doubtful whether the officers would be employed: they had, however, been most cordially received by the Seraskier Pacha, the minister of war.

LETTER XIV.

A RAMBLE THROUGH STAMBOUL — PATROL — INFLAMMABLE NATURE OF THE BUILDINGS — BAZAARS — MERCHANTS — TRIFLING REMAINS OF ANTIQUITY — AQUEDUCT — THE TOWER OF LEANDER — LEGEND ATTACHED TO IT — BEAUTY OF THE CAIKS — BOATMEN — VALLEY OF SWEET WATERS — ITS MIASMA — TURKISH PROMENADE — GAY ASSEMBLY — TURKISH LADIES — UNHEALTHY ASPECT OF THE POPULATION — CAUSES OF THE INSALUBRITY OF CONSTANTINOPLE.

THE day after my arrival, I proceeded to view Constantinople, its suburbs and adjacent villages, more in detail; and though I cannot pretend to give you any other than a slight sketch, yet I will not fail to particularise those objects which have most interested me. This city is altogether unlike any other I have ever seen; the houses are, for the most part, only one story high, and the silence that pervades a capital, in which so large a concourse of human beings are congregated, is gloomy and depressing. As for carts and carriages rolling through the streets, there are none, with the exception of a few vehicles

called *arabacs*, drawn by buffaloes, at a hearse-like pace, in which the Turkish women, the greater number still veiled to the eyes, take the air.

The only sounds that interrupt the stillness, are the cries of the itinerant venders of sweetmeats and sherbets, or the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer from the tops of the minarets. These are succeeded at night by the howling and barking of dogs, the screams of vultures, and the patrol striking the stones with their iron-shod staves, and shouting with all the force of their lungs, "*Yangenrar!*" fire! fire! for scarcely a night passes in which a fire does not occur in some part of this most inflammable city.

Nor can we feel surprised at this, when we remember that the whole town, with the exception of the mosques and a few government offices, is built of wood. Yet, strange to say, although this dreadful scourge has repeatedly reduced the greater part of this unfortunate capital to ruins, these infatuated people still continue to construct their dwellings of the same material: neither do they make the slightest alteration in the architecture, but proceed to erect upon the same spot a duplicate of its predecessor.

The most amusing places for passing an idle half hour are the bazaars. These consist of long ranges of galleries, or arcades, so extensive as to

resemble a city within a city; they are appropriated to the sale of every description of merchandise, from a diamond-ring to a pipe-bowl, from a Cachmire shawl to a carpet. In the merchants we find every variety of costume, manners, and language.

The Turk may be at once recognised by the gravity of his demeanour: squatted on his counter, he quietly smokes his tchibouque, and most leisurely transfers his wares to such customers as will purchase them.

The Armenian is distinguished by the cheerful, or, as the Frank construes it, designing smile on his countenance: he is taciturn, patient, civil, yet wily as a serpent, and generally wealthy. How different from the noisy, mercurial Greek, on approaching whose stall you are assailed with a torrent of eloquence, describing the excellence of his merchandise: each separate article is exhibited, and its perfections most volubly set forth; but the traveller must be aware of giving credence to his representations, for he is generally a cheat.

The aspect of the oppressed, humiliated Hebrew, is here very different from that of his happier brethren in our own more tolerant land. Accustomed from infancy to contumely and scorn, he is patient, mild, and forbearing. Obliged to perform the office of interpreter between the

Turks and Franks in all their bargains, he is generally acquainted with seven or eight languages; but speaks none correctly, and always with the nasal accent peculiar to this people in every part of the world. It is, indeed, very difficult to comprehend him; however, by calling in the aid of pantomime, he generally succeeds, when he is often no better rewarded by the haughty Turk than with every insulting epithet.

Few are the vestiges now existing of the once glorious city of Constantine; and in seeking for the remains of his sumptuous palace, we find nothing more dignified than the cattle-market, the mosque of San Sophia being the only edifice that has survived the devastation of war and the rule of the Osmanlis. The seraglio, rather an imposing building, is said to occupy a large portion of the site of the ancient Byzantium; and the Hippodrome, the race-course of the Greeks, now the Atmeidan (Champs de Mars) of the Turks, is only interesting for having in its centre an Egyptian obelisk, together with the famous brazen column composed of three spiral serpents, which the butchering barbarians have thought proper to decapitate.

The aqueduct still exists, and still supplies Stamboul with water, as it did in the days of the conquerors of the world; and, whether viewed

from the Bosphorus or its shores, forms a very beautiful feature in the landscape. The splendid bath, with its hundred marble pillars, so long hidden under the ruins of the once-proud city, has again seen the light. These are the only lions of antiquity to be found in Stamboul at the present day, with the exception of the celebrated Tour de Leandre, or, as the Turks more appropriately call it, Kiz-Koulesi, the Tower of the Maiden, which is more romantic for its legend than its form, although it has the advantage of being built upon a rock in the midst of the rapid Bosphorus.

Do not, however, suppose that this tower is in any way connected with the current-daring lover of Hero. No; for tradition tells us that this singular structure was erected by one of the early emperors of Byzantium, solely for the protection of a very beautiful daughter; of whom it was prophesied at her birth, that she should die by the sting of a serpent. With the hope of eluding the prediction, the fond father had this isolated tower erected for her habitation, and her various wants supplied from his own palace. But Destiny, who is very obstinate in accomplishing her purposes, blinded the vigilance of the attendants; for they allowed an asp, concealed in a bouquet of flowers, to fulfil the decrees of her inexorable fate.

Finding but little amusement in perambulating the dreary, half-deserted streets of Constantinople, or in watching the porpoise-like march of the slowly-moving Turk, or his lady-phantom closely enveloped in the ample folds of the *yashmack*, I entered my *caïk*, resolving to ascertain if the environs afforded more variety and animation. These boats, the most beautiful work of a Turk's hand, are extremely elegant, measure about thirty feet long, and from two to three in breadth. They are generally built of oak or chesnut, fancifully carved and varnished: the prow is sharply pointed with iron, and cuts through the water with the velocity of an arrow. They are somewhat perilous to strangers, for, by a very slight inclination to either side, they lose their equilibrium; this the Turks generally preserve, by lying down in the centre.

Thousands of these pretty little barks may be seen skimming from shore to shore, varying in dimensions, and calculated to hold from four to eight persons. The more wealthy of the inhabitants here, like those of Venice, substitute a boat for a carriage; the rowers being also employed as servants.

The boatmen, who are said to amount to upwards of sixty thousand, are a very fine race of men, and usually under thirty years of age.

Their costume tends not a little to improve their personal appearance: the folds of their white Cossack trowsers are confined at the waist by a silk shawl; a sort of silk shirt, open at the throat, and displaying the fine contour of the neck and chest, with very full sleeves only descending to the elbow, completes their dress,—except a red woollen cap, surmounted by a blue silk tassel, which, when waving in the wind, imparts a very graceful effect to the *tout ensemble.*

My first aquatic excursion was to the romantic Kiat-hané, or, as the Franks call it, "les Eaux Douces," the favourite promenade of the Stambouli *beau monde,* and so frequently described by travellers as the most lovely of all the lovely spots in the immediate vicinity of the capital. We soon shot through the beautiful bay of the Golden Horn, and ascended the Barbyses, which slowly glides through a narrow valley, lined on either side by romantic hills. Myriads of wild bees, and butterflies of every shade and colour, were then murmuring in the long grass on its verdant banks, or revelling among the roses and other flowers of the garden; while those poetical birds, the turtle-dove and the stork, so characteristic of the land of the east, vied with each other in their tender endearments of love, and made the groves of cypresses resound with their incessant cooing.

In addition to all this, there are the two pretty chiosks belonging to the great Padishah himself. Who then will refuse to acknowledge that Kiathané is a very delightful place—brilliant like a glimpse of paradise? But all light has its shade, and this place, although called by the attractive name of "the Valley of Sweet Waters," yet might with equal truth be termed the valley of death; for, treacherous as the serpent in the grass, while its beautiful scenery charms the senses, its poisonous miasma insidiously creeps through the veins, inoculates the frame with disease, and not unfrequently with death.

This is owing to the situation of the valley at the confluence of the two small stagnant marshy rivers, the Barbyses and the Cydares; and being a long narrow defile between lofty hills, that completely exclude the purifying summer winds from the Euxine, the mephitic vapours generated are so extremely noxious, that fever is certain to be the portion of him who slumbers within their influence, or prolongs his stay in the "Valley of Sweet Waters!" after sunset.

I have already said that the aspect of the surrounding country was romantic and picturesque: this was improved by flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle and horses, quietly grazing on the sloping meadows, attended by Bulgarian shepherds play-

ing their doleful ditties on their still more doleful pipes, and as primitive in their costume and manners as if they had just arrived from the wilds of Tartary. In addition to these, droves of buffaloes were wallowing in the mire on the banks of the rivers, and hundreds of the inhabitants of Constantinople enjoying the bright sun of a day in June.

Here the Turks, seated upon carpets beneath the cool shade of fine plane trees, were smoking their eternal tchibouques: there, in separate groups, Armenian, Turkish, Grecian, and Jewish women, in their respective costumes, were promenading and smoking amidst groves of cypresses, intermingled with equestrians mounted on Arabian horses richly caparisoned, and carriages, of which I can give you no better idea than to say that they resembled gilded cages covered with scarlet cloth, and fitted up with cushions; the whole forming a picture perfectly oriental. Numbers of jesters performing their grotesque antics, together with itinerant musicians, dancing-girls, fortune-tellers, venders of sweetmeats, sherbet, and coffee, mulatto servants and sable eunuchs, contributed to the variety and animation of the scene. I was informed that many of the ladies I saw unveiled were Turkish; and it appears, in compliance with the wishes of the Sultan, this

innovation upon the laws of the harem is daily becoming more general.

I confess, I think that travellers have somewhat overrated the beauty and peculiar attraction of the women in Constantinople. Through the kindness of my Turkish friends, I had more than once the honour of partaking of an entertainment served by the women of my host unveiled; and certainly, so far as regards the transparent paleness of their complexions and the delicate outline of their regular features, contrasted with the darkest hair, and eyes soft and black as the gazelle's, they are very lovely women: but there is a total want of vivacity, sentiment, and intelligence in their expression; and however becoming their dress may be in-doors, when divested of the ill-shaped wrapper, yet this, together with the veil bound over the face, which is only partially abandoned, so completely envelopes their forms when taking the air, that grace and elegance are totally out of the question. Nor do their yellow leather boots, or slipshod slippers, by any means add to the beauty of their feet; which little supporters every oriental woman that I ever beheld invariably turns inward, —a practice no doubt originated by the position in which they are accustomed to sit.

Some of the Grecian women, in their pretty turbaned head-dresses, I thought handsome; but

even these had, in common with the whole of the Constantinople population, a pallid tint, which plainly told that this capital is not healthy: and, indeed, whoever has contemplated the swampy tracts in its neighbourhood, will find no difficulty in explaining at least one of the causes.

Let us regard the muddy streams that flow into the Propontis and the Golden Horn, obstructed at their mouths and dilated into morasses; the putrid lake of Nicea, the fertile swamps of Bythnia, and the stagnant ponds at Belgrade; and we cannot feel surprised, when the wind brings the effluvia from any of these marshes into the pent-up channel of the Golden Horn and the narrow dirty lanes of Stamboul, that disease invariably follows.

Still, if an industrious, intelligent people occupied the country, this evil might be easily remedied by judicious draining. Not that this cause of insalubrity, however prolific, is its only origin; for it may be more clearly traced to the dirty, filthy habits of the inhabitants, who, enervated by excesses, become the ready recipients of malaria.

The passing stranger might deem the Turks, from their repeated ablutions and frequent use of the bath, a cleanly people. No such thing; for though these practices, so far as they go, deserve

commendation, yet their wearing apparel is seldom changed, and still more seldom washed: add to which, the virtue of cleanliness is totally disregarded in their towns, for the narrow streets have no other scavengers than the vultures and dogs. Sewers are totally unknown, and the carcasses of such animals as may happen to die, remain in the public thoroughfare till the above-mentioned scavengers find leisure and appetite to consume them; and should they happen to be bulky, such as camels, donkeys, or horses, I have more than once seen a narrow lane impassable.

Another most pernicious practice is, that the butchers are permitted to make the streets their slaughter-houses: hence, when all these combined horrors of dirt and laziness are considered, it appears an inevitable result that an epidemic should invariably assume the most malignant form. We may therefore rest assured, that marsh malaria is not the only scourge that is gradually depopulating these countries; it being only secondary to the mischief produced by decomposed animal matter, which, aided by a predisposed state of the atmosphere, is, according to the opinion of the best-informed medical men (domiciliated in the east) with whom I conversed, the primary cause of the plague. It is also the reason why this dreadful malady is confined to these

countries, while others in similar latitudes are exempt; which is further demonstrated by the fact, that it never prevails any length of time in a country where cleanliness is generally practised.

Since the breaking out of the plague at Smyrna, and its rapid progress in the adjoining provinces, the alarm has spread to Constantinople, which has had the effect of reviving in the mind of the Sultan his intention to establish* lazarettos throughout the empire. As, however, the Korân expressly forbids its followers to stop the advances of the destroying angel, the determination of the people to obey the commands of the prophet must first be overcome, before we can expect to see this resolution acted upon. Still, as the Sultan has already emancipated himself from more than one superstitious observance, and, with a mind far in advance of the intellectual condition of his people, effected several important reforms tending to their regeneration, a hope is raised for his future success. But do not fall into the error of supposing, that if lazarettos were established to-morrow, this fearful scourge would be eradicated from the Turkish empire. No; be assured the

* Since the publication of the first edition of this work, Sultan Mahmoud has succeeded, notwithstanding the opposition of the Mahomedan clergy, in establishing lazarettos and quarantine laws throughout his dominions.

germ of the disease lies in the causes I have specified: and the Sultan could not confer a greater benefit upon posterity, nor originate a plan that would more effectually banish the plague from his dominions, than to enforce a complete reformation in the habits and manners of the people, their houses, towns, and cities.

LETTER XV.

CLIMATE OF CONSTANTINOPLE—AQUATIC EXCURSIONS—PICTURESQUE APPEARANCE OF THE CITY—FRANK SOCIETY—FEMALE SLAVE BAZAAR—ITS REPULSIVE FEATURES—VALUE OF THE WOMEN—SCARCITY OF CIRCASSIANS IN THE MARKET.

AFTER the morbid details I transmitted in my last letter, I dare say you consider me a most pestilential fellow, and that I have given this unfavourable description of its salubrity, entirely to deter you from your intended visit to the capital of the Osmanlis. Be assured, however, that the traveller possessed of health and prudence may reside here without the slightest apprehension; for though the plague too frequently prevails, and the malaria sometimes causes severe indisposition to the incautious, whether native or stranger, yet the mortality, when compared with other capitals, is not so great as might be supposed.

Must we not therefore conclude, that the climate is not generally prejudicial to health, otherwise the King of Terrors, with such formidable

allies, would ere this have swept away the entire population. And we must also be of the opinion, that if judicious sanatary laws were in force, Constantinople would be as healthy as the most salubrious city in Europe.

But how are these innovating ordinances to be established among a people, who are taught from the cradle to regard with contempt every usage that emanates from Christians, and every attempt to imitate them represented by their ignorant fanatic priests as the most sinful impiety. Still it must be confessed, that to render the town salubrious would be a somewhat expensive undertaking; for it must first be burnt to ashes in order to destroy the germ of pestilence, and then rebuilt according to the most approved European plans.

I shall now take leave of this dry subject, and conduct you with me in my aquatic excursions, which, after all, are the great charm of this city; and, indeed, nothing can be more delightful than to be seated in one of these pretty fairy barks, which in elegance far surpass the funereal gondolas of Venice, and are infinitely superior to anything we have in England.

How often have I glided over the clear blue waves of the Golden Horn from Galata to Scutari, from Buyukderè and Therapia on the Bos-

phorus, to the lovely Grecian Islands of Prinkipo in the sea of Marmora, &c. In short, I rarely passed a day without a boating expedition, to which I attribute, in a great measure, the uninterrupted good health I enjoyed.

It was here, indeed, while reclining in my caïk beneath the unclouded brilliance of a southern sky, that I passed the pleasantest hours of my residence at Stamboul; from hence, I was accustomed to contemplate the extensive coup d'œil of this most picturesque city. I glanced from the swelling domes, resplendent spires, and crescent-crowned minarets, to the vast suburbs of Galata, Pera, and the wide-spreading Scutari, with its dark groves of mournful cypresses.

By merely making a slight curve, I came to the transparent Bosphorus with its verdant banks and pretty villages: then I turned to the seven towers of the sea of Marmora and the massive walls of the seraglio, each of which forms in itself a picture. Then my eye wandered to the broad expanse of the Propontis, and the wavy outline of the wild heathy hills of Thrace; from the solitary mountains of Asia Minor to the snowy summit of the sublime Olympus. These scenes, which defy the power of language to describe, or the skill of the painter to depict, constituted an unfailing source of pleasure during my sojourn in a city as

dull, with respect to amusements and society, as if inhabited by a community of Trappists.

The resources of the English legation were wanting; for the palace of the ambassador having been consumed during the late conflagration at Pera, his excellency is obliged to reside at present in the country, at Therapia, some seven or eight miles distant. Our worthy consul, Mr. C——, is still there; but, beyond his hospitable roof, if the traveller is desirous of enjoying the society of the English and Frank merchants, he will be sadly disappointed; and still more so, if he expects to receive any accurate information respecting the country; for jarring interests on the one hand, and the fear of the plague on the other, prevent any extended intercourse. And if to these we add the other members of the *corps diplomatique*, who unfortunately, from living in a metropolis, the very hotbed of every species of political intrigue, are not always on visiting terms with each other, I have enumerated the Frank society of Constantinople.

I was, however, fortunate in having a Turkish friend at Stamboul: this was M—— Effendi ——, of whom you must have heard, or seen, when he resided in England, and from whose high rank in the divan and cultivated intellect, I now had an opportunity of gleaning much valuable information

respecting Turkey and her government. He kindly presented me to the Sultan, and introduced me to some of the most patriotic men in the empire, and also procured me many other advantages not usually accorded to a stranger. I cannot conceive why this excellent man has been denounced as a friend to the interests of Russia, for assuredly every action of his life has been devoted to advance the welfare of his country; and notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, he has ever proved himself a firm advocate of England, and of the integrity of her policy towards Turkey. And those among my compatriots who have enjoyed his hospitality, and are acquainted with the real excellencies of his character, will confirm the truth of what is here asserted respecting him.

One of my first visits was to the bazaar for the sale of female slaves. Franks, if known to be such, are not permitted to enter; but being habited in the dress of a Turkish officer, and accompanied by my Turkish friend, I easily gained admittance. This building consists of a large quadrangular court, two stories high, surrounded by a portico, with a gallery above: each story contains a range of small cells similar to those in a monastery.

The ground-floor is appropriated to the copper-

coloured daughters of Abysinnia and negro women; while those above, being somewhat more elegant and airy, are reserved for the beauties of Circassia, Georgia, Mingrelia, Greece, &c. These unfortunates, for the most part pale and emaciated, were huddled like animals six or seven together, the thermometer at the same time ranging at ninety degrees in the shade. The majority were gaudily attired for the purpose of heightening their charms, and many of them were strikingly beautiful.

Several of the black women, particularly the Abyssinians, were remarkable for the symmetry of their forms and features. But how disgusting was it to behold every barbarian of an Osmanli who pretended to be a judge of female perfections, or the licentious libertine, examining the features and forms of the poor innocent wretches exposed for sale like herds of cattle. Really no scene of human wretchedness and degradation can equal this; and however consonant the practice may be to oriental manners, and those of other slave countries, it excited in me feelings of the strongest repugnance, and I sincerely regretted having gratified my curiosity. Indeed, I would from my soul entreat the man who thinks highly of human nature, never to cross the threshold of a slave bazaar.

The bare idea of selling an immortal being,—life, liberty, all, was absolutely revolting. I felt ashamed of my species, ashamed of being classed among beings capable of committing such a crime against humanity, and never gloried more in the name of a Briton than at that moment: I was proud of my generous country, that had sacrificed millions to eradicate this stain of barbarism from every land over which her flag waved.

So strong, however, is the force of early habits of thinking, that these unfortunate beings seemed indifferent to their fate; for they laughed, skipped, and played together with the greatest cheerfulness, and even gaiety. Poor children! to them ignorance was truly bliss; for, of all that I beheld, there was not more than half a dozen that exhibited the appearance of being really dejected; the majority did not even seem endowed with the faintest ray of sensibility, and the oldest could not have arrived at the age of eighteen.

A few bargains were concluded during our visit; when the little victim took up her tiny packet, covered her face with her white veil, and followed her new lord, apparently without a murmur.

Their price, like that of every other commodity, is regulated by the demand and the supply.

The Circassians, Georgians, and Grecians were the most valued, and always estimated according to their beauty. The two former being very difficult to procure, on account of the strict blockade maintained by Russia on the Circassian coast of the Black Sea, now fetch as high a price as a hundred pounds; a well-made and healthy Abyssinian might be purchased for about thirty, while the poor negro woman was not considered worth more than ten or fifteen.

LETTER XVI.

VISIT TO THE MOSQUES WITH THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR—MOSQUE OF VALIDO—OF OSMAN III.—OF SOLYMAN THE MAGNIFICENT—HIS TOMB—MEDITATIONS OF THE SULTAN—MOSQUE OF BAJAZET II.—INTERIOR—MOSQUE OF ACHMET—TOMB OF SELIM II. SUPERB MSS. OF THE KORAN—MOSQUE OF SAN SOPHIA—TURKISH FANATICISM—STYLE OF THE ARCHITECTURE—MOSAIC PAINTINGS—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS UPON THE MOSQUES.

HAVING thus given you some account of the slave market, I shall next conduct you to the mosques, which, of all the lions of Constantinople, are the most difficult of access to a Frank: for however relaxed an Osmanli may have become in the inveteracy of his oriental habits, and however desirous to conform to European fashions, yet I invariably found him, whether believer or sceptic, ever determined to seal the door of the mosque to the entrance of the Giaour. Nay, the very man who would not scruple to introduce me to his harem, or the most private recesses of Turkish life, would be proof against every solicitation to

lend his influence in obtaining a sight of the interior of St. Sophia.

In the present instance, I was indebted to M. Bouténeff, the Russian ambassador, who solicited, or rather commanded the boon; for it is said, that a Russian petition involuntarily assumes this form at Constantinople. However, be this as it may, the privilege was demanded and conceded, for the purpose of gratifying a Russian lady of high rank, the wife of General Leon Nariskin, who had recently arrived from Odessa.

However this profanation might have shocked the pious among the population of Stamboul, yet the sons of St. Crispin had abundant reason to rejoice; for as no person is allowed to enter the sacred precincts of the mosque without slippers, and as on these occasions a large concourse of christian strangers would be certain to attend, thousands of piastres would be equally sure to find their way into the pockets of the slipper-making tribe.

The first mosque we visited was that usually called the new mosque, Venidschanir, built by Valido, mother of Mahomet IV. She was a woman of masculine mind and daring resolution, qualities the more remarkable when exhibited in a country where woman is detained in such debasing slavery. Like Catherine de Medicis, she

took advantage of the minority of her son, and established her influence so firmly, that she directed the springs which then set this great empire in motion. This mosque had nothing to distinguish it, except vastness.

We next entered that near the bazaars, completed by Osman III. in 1750, being the last work erected in Constantinople on a colossal scale. This, also, did not exhibit any architectural beauty; but I could not help noticing a pair of tremendous candelabras, containing wax tapers, or rather columns, of such gigantic size that they might have served as masts for a ship.

The mosque of Solyman the Great now attracted our attention, containing his mausoleum, which was at once simple and striking. Two coffins, containing the remains of this great man and his son, covered with Cachmire shawls, on which lay two turbans, reposed in a pretty pavilion. An inscription in gold letters recorded their names, and the day of their decease. Around the tomb, lamps and wax tapers are constantly burning. The chapel is decorated with tablets, over which are written different passages of the Korân. This, like every other of the tombs of the Sultans, is at all times open to the faithful, who frequently come here to offer up their devotions.

Near the tomb is a divan, appropriated exclusively to the use of the reigning Sultan; and here, it is said, amidst the silence of the grave, and bending over the ashes of his great ancestor, Mahmoud meditates upon the moral and political state of his empire; here engenders his plans for her improvement, his designs for the regeneration of his people.

This mosque is not less admirable for the boldness of its design, than for the colossal size of the granite columns which support its splendid dome. It was originally constructed from the remains of the christian church St. Euphemia, which also had been indebted for its materials to the heathen temple dedicated to Apollo; having thus served in succession for the celebration of divine service to the heathen, Christian, and Mahometan.

In the vicinity of the palace of the Seraskier Pacha, (minister of war,) we have the fine mosque of Bajazet II.; for, with few exceptions, every Sultan of the Ottoman empire erected one during his reign. A description, however, of this would only be a repetition of what I have before said; for all these buildings are similar in form and decorations, the only difference being in size and splendour.

The beautiful pictures and statues which delight the amateur in the temples devoted to

Catholic worship, find no place here, being expressly forbidden by the Korân. A mosque is generally adorned with several cupolas, supported by porphyry, jasper, or marble columns; with a court-yard in front, decorated with a fountain in the form of a temple, and shaded with the united foliage of the cypress, plane, sycamore, and other trees, forming a most agreeable retreat during the heats of summer. The branches are sure to be the resting-place of myriads of doves; this bird being an especial favourite with the disciples of Mahomet.

The mosque called Achmed, near the Hippodrome, is that usually visited by the Sultan and the different members of the divan on great public occasions. In the court-yard, a tree was pointed out to us, upon which, it is said, several of the janissaries were executed during the general massacre of that body.

We now approached San Sophia, the Russian ambassador having judiciously arranged that we should visit it the last. I was much struck by its colossal dimensions; but though anxious to enter, we were obliged to restrain our impatience, as it was the third hour of the day, when, according to the rites of the religion of Mahomet, numbers of Turks were engaged in prayer.

We occupied ourselves, in the mean time, in

viewing the adjoining chapel, which contains the tomb of Selim II., who repaired San Sophia after it was much injured by an earthquake. Sultan Selim was worthy of being a priest of Bacchus; for, according to his biographers, such was his devotion to the wines of Cyprus, as to induce him to undertake an expedition against that island for the purpose of becoming sole possessor of the vineyards. The gratification of his desire cost the lives of twenty-five thousand Greeks; and he himself, after indulging one evening too freely in his beloved nectar, fell into a sleep, from which he only awoke in eternity.

Here we were shown a curious model, in relief, of the city of the holy prophet: the procession of the pilgrims is delineated with much spirit and fidelity. Two superb copies of the Korân were also objects of general admiration. They were folio MSS., but executed with such neatness and precision, that the spectator might deem them exquisite specimens of typography; the vignettes and ornaments were of fine gold, and as they were beautifully bound in silk, and reposed on a velvet cushion, presented a most splendid appearance.

At length the signal was given for our entrance into San Sophia; and surely never, since the days of Constantine, did so large an assemblage of

Christians cross the threshold of this superb temple of public worship. Indeed, the louring frown on the countenances of the Turks, on beholding the intrusion of such numbers of infidels, made us almost fear that their ill-humour would break out in a scene of violence similar to that perpetrated upon the Chevalier Tamara and his party, who, you are probably aware, was ambassador from the court of St. Petersburg to the Ottoman Porte in the reign of Paul I.

The gallant knight, having received a firman from the Sultan for that purpose, proceeded, accompanied with his suite, to visit some of the mosques; when, during the time he was in that of Sultan Solyman, the moullahs observed a Russian laughing. Supposing that this levity originated in contempt for their religion, they imparted their suspicions to the fanatic mob, who attacked the ambassador and his retinue, and would certainly have massacred the whole, if it had not been for the speedy interference of a corps of janissaries: as it was, every individual of the party suffered in a greater or a less degree.

I, however, have no such tragedy to record; for the fanatic priests were contented to vent their ill-humour upon a few unoffending Greeks, who had snatched a brief respite from their daily toil to enjoy a momentary glance at the temple

of their great ancestors; these the moullahs rudely kicked out, either, I suppose, because they were shabbily dressed, or had forgotten their slippers.

On entering this venerable pile, the silence of the multitude was remarkable; they did not utter even a murmur of admiration; while here and there might be seen a kneeling Greek, weeping over the profanation of the temple of his forefathers. It must indeed have been painful to this people to behold the spot on which the last of the Constantines implored the assistance of Heaven, before he went out to meet the infidel power destined to work his overthrow. The first object that struck me, as I surveyed the interior of the edifice, was the colours of Mahomet II., placed by his own hand on each side of the pulpit to commemorate his conquest.

The immense area of this stupendous fabric, being unencumbered by altars, statues, pews, chapels, or indeed any object which can tend to detract from its size, immediately excites the idea of vastness; which after all is not so great, when we remember that the diameter of the dome is no more than a hundred and five feet, being twenty-five less than St. Peter's at Rome, and only five more than St. Paul's of London. The impression of its magnitude is also, in a great degree, referable to the very inconsiderable elevation of

the cupola in proportion to its circumference; for though the height of the building is a hundred and sixty-five feet, yet the altitude of the dôme is no more than eighteen. This circumstance constitutes the great and only merit in the architecture of the building. San Sophia is extremely sombre, and, being destitute of every ornament, except a few verses from the Korân inscribed on tablets, gives more the idea of a colossal tomb, than of a place dedicated to divine worship. Indeed the only object which reminds a Christian of its sacred destination is the marble pulpit, from which the priest delivers a few precepts out of the Korân, or promulgates a new law ordained by the Sultan. Still, when the numerous and many coloured glass lamps suspended from the dome are lighted, and the spacious edifice filled by a congregation of worshippers, the effect must be most imposing.

The style of the architecture of San Sophia tells very plainly that it was erected at a period of the Roman empire, when the principles of pure taste had become corrupted. The exterior presents a heterogeneous mixture of piles and buttresses, and the general effect of the building would be dumpy, were it not for the airy, graceful minarets which rise like fairy columns above the dome.

The interior is not more felicitous in its decorations, for the porphyry, Egyptian granite, and marble columns are all of different orders, and the ruins of several heathen temples have evidently been robbed to furnish them; many are mutilated, and the greater number have been arranged by the architect in utter defiance of the laws of symmetry.

The fine mosaic pavement, one of the most beautiful objects of art belonging to the edifice, is entirely covered by several folds of Egyptian matting; and the splendid mosaic paintings that ornamented the dome have even shared a worse fate; for the Turks, who regard the fine arts as blasphemous, upon converting the christian temple into a mosque, veiled the offending pictures with a thick coat of plaster. They were, however, destined to sustain a still greater and more irreparable injury through the fanaticism of the Greeks, who, anxious to obtain some relic of so sacred an edifice, bribed the Turkish custodia to abstract small pieces of the crystals, which they caused to be converted into trinkets, and the pious throughout Christendom became the purchasers. In process of time, the theft was discovered: the Mussulmans were furious, and such has been the angry feeling created in their breasts, even to the present day, by this act of

sacrilegious spoliation, that the life of any Christian would certainly be endangered, if he were to enter St. Sophia without a firman.

The mosques of Constantinople are not calculated, when viewed in detail, to bear a critical examination ; still, from their novel style of architecture, and the graceful form of the tapering minaret, they captivate the imagination of the beholder, and win from his judgment the tribute of involuntary admiration. That of St. Sophia, though it must yield in beauty to the mosque of Sultan Achmet, the finest building ever erected by the Turks, is far more interesting, from its connexion with the early history of the church, the downfal of the empire of the East, and the establishment of Islamism in Europe.

While contemplating the mutilated remains of the cross, and the statues of the evangelists on the exterior of San Sophia, how forcibly are we reminded of that dreadful day when the altars of Christ were overturned, and but three short hours intervened between the celebration of Christian and Mahometan worship; and this amidst a carnage, of which the world, fortunately, has had but few examples!

LETTER XVII.

TURKISH LOVE-AFFAIR — COURTSHIP — MARRIAGE — FESTIVAL—HAREM—INTERIOR—CUSTOMS AND MANNERS OF THE WOMEN—TURKISH SUPERSTITION—SULTAN'S ASTROLOGER —AMULETS—DECREASE OF FANATICISM—TOLERANCE OF THE MUSSULMANS TOWARDS GIAOURS.

In my last, I hope I conveyed to your mind a faint outline of the grand temple of Islamism: the filling up I must leave to your own imagination; and as the transition from a church to a marriage is not difficult, I will now attempt to give you a sketch of the ceremonial of a Turkish bridal. In consequence of the absence of all intercourse between the sexes in this country, a marriage resulting from mutual attachment does not often occur. When it, however, does really happen that a youthful Effendi is captivated by the shadow of some fair flower of the harem, as, enveloped in the ample folds of white muslin, she is repairing to the bath attended by her slaves, the inamorato, instead of sending a billet-doux, most sentimentally drops a bouquet of hyacinths

in the path of the lady as she returns, waddling like a stately swan just emerged from the water; for be it remembered, that in Turkey reading and writing form no part of the education of the gentler sex, and not often of their sterner lords.

One of the female attendants, by the aid of a purse of sequins, is converted into a Mercury; she presents the nosegay to her mistress, telling her that an aspiring butterfly sighs to obtain possession of the beautiful rose; or, to drop metaphor, that a certain rich and handsome Effendi desires the honour of her hand. Should the rose blush consent and accept the flowers, a carnation, wrapped in an embroidered handkerchief, is sent to the butterfly; and, as a further encouragement, on her next visit to the bath, by some unlooked-for accident, the veil drops from her face and snow-white arms, and she stands for an instant, revealed in all her loveliness, before her astonished admirer.

Enchanted by such a vision of beauty, the butterfly wings its way to the father of the blushing rose; and either stipulates to pay a certain sum for the object of his wishes, or wins his consent by rich presents, and the prospect of the advantages to be derived from an alliance with an Effendi of such powerful connexions.

After this preliminary has been concluded,

and the dowry agreed upon paid, (for in this country a man is not only obliged to purchase his wife, but to make a settlement upon her,) the bridegroom repairs to the mosque, and announces his intention to the iman, who offers up a few appropriate prayers; which shows that even the Mahometan invests this ceremony with a religious character. It is also regarded as a civil contract, being publicly registered in the presence of the cadi, parents, and friends of both parties.

When the different formalities have been completed, the bride is conducted with great pomp to the bath, where she submits to a long process of perfuming, anointing, &c. She is then taken to her husband's dwelling in a very gay, gilded car, with a gaudy canopy, drawn by a team of buffaloes, in which she is seated like a gem in a casket, her whole form enveloped in a rich gold gauze.

On these festive occasions, there are always troops of cavaliers in attendance, buffoons, dancing-girls, bands of music, &c.; therefore the din, as you may well suppose, caused by these uproarious rejoicings, is absolutely deafening. She is received at her new dwelling by her lord or his parents, and introduced to the harem assigned for her use; when the ceremony concludes with two grand entertainments, one for the bride,

and the other for the bridegroom, with their mutual friends.

You are probably aware that the Korân restricts a Turk to four wives, but, on the other hand, permits him to multiply the number of his slaves *ad infinitum*. However, a numerous harem, with all its paraphernalia of eunuchs, domestics, &c., is a most expensive affair, which few Effendis, owing to the impoverished state of the country, can afford to keep; hence they have become more moderate in this indulgence, and now usually content themselves with a couple of wives. These, though obliged to submit to the absolute caprices of their lord, reign despotically over the slaves and the whole household; and not unfrequently, through their artful coquetries, extend their sway even over the great domestic monarch himself.

When visiting my Turkish friends at Constantinople, as I before mentioned, I was more than once admitted into the harem, the Effendis showing little or no repugnance, in this reforming age, to exhibit their wives and slaves; and such is the rapid progress in this, as well as other innovations on their ancient customs, that most probably, in a few years, we shall find the harem converted into a salon, and become the general receiving-room for society.

At some of the entertainments to which I was invited, even the wives and slaves of my host waited upon us at table, for here no woman is allowed the privilege of dipping in the same dish with her lord. The rule is, however, sometimes relaxed in favour of an especial favourite, particularly if she happens to be the mother of a boy, a circumstance which always highly exalts a female, both in the estimation of her lord and of her companions; hence, when fate denies her the happiness of being a mother, it is regarded by a woman, both here and throughout the East, as the greatest curse that can befal her.

Strange to say, the harem I saw at Stamboul, which exhibited the most complete picture of oriental luxury, belonged to a rich Frank. This gentleman, whose name through courtesy I suppress, was not, in spite of our character for eccentricities, an Englishman. He has entirely adopted Turkish manners, even to public attendance at the mosques; though his friends well know that in these observances there is more hypocrisy than faith, as he makes no scruple in expressing opinions totally at variance with the tenets of the Korân. His immense wealth enables him to live in great splendour, and, being of a generous disposition, he frequently gives superb entertainments; but since the attempt

of the traveller, P. P——, to rob him of one of his fair flock, he has become shy of the society of Franks in general, and now seldom invites any persons to visit him except Turks.

The first time I was introduced into his harem, or, properly speaking, reception-salon, I found him, as the weather was extremely warm, reclining on a divan, attended by his women, who were vying with each other in endeavouring to win his approbation.* One was perfuming his beard with otto of roses, another fanning away the flies, and a third with her soft hands shampooed his feet; here a beautiful Circassian was performing on a sort of lute, there another displayed her graceful form in the voluptuous mazes of the dance; while several sat embroidering at a distance, and lastly, a bold-looking Georgian, who by her confident airs and great beauty seemed conscious of being the favourite, exhibited her well-turned arms as she reclined on a Persian carpet, and enjoyed, apparently with much gusto, her tchibouque.

The most aromatic perfumes were burning in the apartment; and the murmuring of the water from a marble fountain in the centre was at once calculated to cool and refresh the air, lull the indolent to sleep, and supply the vacant mind

* See vignette in the title page.

with thought. In short, every aid was resorted to that could in any way pander to the senses. The room opened into a garden filled with flowers, costly carpets covered the floor, and cushions of purple velvet, embroidered in gold, the divan; the ceiling was painted in fresco, and the panels inlaid with mother of pearl or looking-glasses. The women, who were generally lovely, appeared gay and happy: and in order, I suppose, that his selection should be perfectly Turkish, they were beautifully fat! Their dresses were superb and becoming, the colours well blended though gaudy; and their hair, which was ornamented with pearls and precious stones, either fell in long plaits to the waist, or was confined by embroidered gauze.

This enervating indolence and intoxicating luxury, however congenial they may be to some minds, are disgusting to a reflecting man, who considers that life was bestowed for better purposes than to be consumed in unprofitable idleness and degrading sensuality.

I have purposely given you a lengthened account of this harem, its appointments being in a style similar to those of every other, the only difference consisting in the magnificence of the decorations and the number of the inmates. The confinement of the women, and the restraints

imposed upon them, are not so irksome as you would imagine: and even these are becoming every day less rigorous. Besides their promenades to the valleys of the Sweet Waters in Europe and Asia, and frequent visits to their friends, we see them riding in their gilded cars, sailing on the Bosphorus in their elegant caïks or the magnificent *kachamba*, (a sort of barge,) whilst whole days are passed in the luxury of the bath,—the terrestrial paradise of every oriental woman. Here they breakfast, dine, sup, or eat confectionaries.

Notwithstanding all that travellers say to the contrary, when reprobating the usages and customs of the Turks with respect to the confinement of their women, perhaps they are happier than we expect; for let it be remembered their intellect is never educated, and they are utterly ignorant of any other mode of living. The inhabitants of most countries, I believe, adapt their manners and customs to the climate and other circumstances; consequently, for aught we know to the contrary, it may have been found necessary to resort to restraint with the women of the East. Most certain it is, they are exceedingly circumspect in their conduct, for the detection of a single imprudent act leads to the introduction of the hakkim, who administers a sleeping

potion ; or to that of the eunuch, who consigns the frail fair one to the bottom of the Bosphorus in a sack.

One of the greatest foibles in the character of the Turk is superstition ; we find it pervading all classes, from the lowest peasant to the great Padishah of all the Osmanlis himself ; and though we must give that monarch great credit for his enlightened mind and good qualities, when compared with his ignorant predecessors and benighted subjects, yet in education Sultan Mahmoud is still a Turk ; and perhaps in nothing more so than that he retains near his person, according to the custom of his ancestors, a munedjimbashi, (chief astrologer,) although the practice is in direct opposition to the Korân, which denounces astrology as a crime only inferior to idolatry.

It is however to be hoped, that even this relic of the dark ages will soon be dispensed with by a man who has shown such a predilection for the society of the learned of every country ; and so great an anxiety to enlighten the minds of his people, and to raise them to a level with European intelligence.

Amulets are still worn by every true Osmanli. The priests and imans sell charms wholesale,—one to keep out Schitan, (Satan ;) another to make

a lady fat and fruitful; and a third, above all, to ward off the evil eye, which is always to be dreaded in a stranger, particularly if he admires the beauty of their wives and children. In short, you cannot annoy a Turk more than to speak in terms of commendation of anything belonging to him.

The manufacture of the myriads of amulets constitutes a most lucrative employment to thousands of the Stambouli artisans, and their sale a source of immense revenue to the priests who consecrate them; for the little safeguards against evil are not only made in the form of elegant trinkets for the higher classes, but we find them, of a ruder fabrication, worn by the whole population. Every house has one suspended over the door; the shepherd ties them around the horns of his flocks and herds; the tradesman attaches them to the different articles he sells, to preserve them from fire; and the cavalier never ventures on horseback without suspending one around the neck of his charger.

Notwithstanding all this, after perusing the accounts of Turkey and its inhabitants, written even within the last few years, the traveller, upon visiting Stamboul, cannot but be forcibly struck with the decided decrease of superstition, but more particularly of fanaticism, among the peo-

ple. Their increase of charitable feeling towards the Giaour, is no doubt referable, partly to the humiliating defeats they sustained by Christian prowess, the battle of Navarino, and the important advantages obtained by the Russians; and partly, perhaps I ought to say principally, to steam navigation. This, by attracting a concourse of strangers to the capital, has had the effect of tearing the veil of prejudice from their eyes, and of convincing them that the customs, manners, and character of the Giaours are not so revolting as their traditions have represented.

Of their toleration and courtesy I can from experience speak confidently, for I repeatedly wandered alone through the streets of Stamboul and the environs, entered their coffee-houses, regaled myself in their *restaurateurs*, attended the military parade, &c.; and so far from meeting with molestation, I was invariably greeted with civility, but more especially when they learned I was an *Ingliz*. In short, except the mosque, which is still sealed to the entrance of the Christian, I feel assured that the traveller may now, without apprehension, extend his promenades as he pleases through the capital, or in the environs, it being only among the ignorant fanatic boors of the provinces that he will meet with ill treatment.

LETTER XVIII.

A FEW OBSERVATIONS UPON THE STATE OF THE TURKISH EMPIRE—ITS RISE AND FALL—RUSSIAN VICTORIES EASILY ACHIEVED—TURKISH CHARACTER—INTOXICATION—INNOVATION OF THE SULTAN ON THE LAWS OF THE KORAN—EFFECTS ON THE PEOPLE—THE KORAN—TURKISH OPINION OF PROTESTANTISM—DEMORALISING TENDENCY OF THE MAHOMETAN RELIGION—ITS INFLUENCE UPON A STRANGER.

ALTHOUGH Turkey, in her late contest with Russia, was made to drink deeply of the cup of bitterness; and though, as an ancient and faithful ally, we must sympathise in her reverses; still, in one point of view, we can scarcely regret her adversity, since it has had the good effect of at least partially dispelling the ignorant delusion of her sons, which may ultimately, (at least the philanthropist indulges in such a hope,) by bringing them more in contact with the tactics and civilisation of foreign nations, tend to operate their regeneration, excite their emulation, and place their country in that position nature intended it should occupy.

Still, when we glance over the pages of the history of this extraordinary people, their rise, progress, and victories; the glory, extent, and magnificence of their once mighty empire, subduing sovereign after sovereign, and threatening with destruction even Christianity itself, we can scarcely wonder at the panoply of self-admiration in which they entrenched themselves; the arrogant contempt with which they regarded all those that differed from them in faith; and the belief, while fighting under the banners of the prophet, that they were invincible.

Should, therefore, the light of civilisation and intelligence dispel the mists of superstition, and direct the energies of such a people into a proper channel, may we not anticipate that they will be able to prop up their decaying empire; and that a course is reserved, if not so brilliant as that granted them in past ages, yet more enduring, because consonant with the best interests of humanity.

However marvellous may appear the rapid aggrandisement of the empire of Mahomet, its decline is no less wonderful; for less than a century has sufficed to strip the Osmanlis of all their glory, and to wrest from them more than half their conquests: a fearful lesson to governments of the necessity of encouraging industry, and of

discountenancing all effeminate vices that may tend to sap the morality and energies of a people.

The Mahomedan suicidally accelerated his own decay: he conquered only for rapine, governed only for extortion; so that his sceptre became a curse to every nation over which he ruled. Sated with conquest and gorged with plunder, he surrendered himself to debasing sloth and enervating indulgences; and, unlike his noble ancestor, who was brave in the field, faithful to his ruler, and generous to his enemies, he now, like a coward, presents the cup of poison with a smile, and murders with the oath of friendship on his lips. Witness the wholesale massacres the Turkish government has perpetrated, and the details of private life which many travellers of unquestionable veracity have furnished, and which I repeatedly heard confirmed by the Frank residents in Turkey.

But to resume our observations on the declension of the Turkish empire. When the mutations of ages had passed away, while the children of the Cross had gone on adding knowledge to knowledge, discovery to discovery, improvement to improvement, the sons of the Crescent remained stationary; and stationary they will remain, so long as they adhere to their civil

and religious institutions, which are not only of a demoralising character, but peremptorily forbid every attempt at innovation.

It is entirely owing to this adherence to ancient usages, that we now find the Turkish empire resembling an antiquated chamber; which, having been closed for centuries, is suddenly exposed to the full glare of the noon-day sun. But as yet, this light has only had the effect of making the Turk stroke his beard with more than usual animation, and exclaim in a louder voice than ordinary, Mashallah! Allah-Keirim!

A country exhausted by the extortion of centuries, a depraved people governed by a succession of weak effeminate princes, abroad an army disorganised for want of pay, at home the janissaries, a band of military ruffians, filling the streets of the capital with scenes of revolutionary violence, would be likely to fall an easy prey to the fury of the invader. Hence we must deem that the laurels of Russia were won without difficulty, and her conquests over the undisciplined armies of the Crescent achieved at little cost.

However, we must concede that the Turkish soldier, unenervated by the oriental vices of his wealthier brethren, still retains all the fiery valour and fanatic zeal of his dauntless ancestors, and

displayed, in defence of his country, prodigies of heroism ; but having had the misfortune of being led on by chiefs without talent or bravery, his courage availed him nothing against an enemy whom, had he the advantages of the same military education, he would have humbled to the dust.

In addition to his other vices, the Turk has added that of intoxication, not as a *theriaki*, (opium-eater,) but as a votary of the vine-crowned deity : even the ladies of the harem have discovered that rosoglio is more piquant than sherbet. During my promenades through the city, scarcely a day passed that I did not see quite as many drunken Turks about the streets as in any city of Christendom ; and you have only to question the Frank merchant, to learn the quantity of rum and rakee consumed by the devout inhabitants of the capital of Moslemism. These they drink openly; for Mahomet, although so great a prophet, was not able to anticipate the discovery of the West Indies ; consequently, could not forbid the indulgence of this intoxicating nectar to his followers. Indeed, it is notorious that the most exalted persons in the empire have been recommended wine for the benefit of their health !

The present Sultan Mahmoud, through the boldness of his reforms, in direct opposition to

the tenets of Islamism, and which alone the fearless energy of his character enabled him to undertake, has shaken the faith of the people in the infallibility of the Korân to its foundation, and completely subverted their belief in the tenet, that no mortal could violate the laws of the prophet with impunity,—laws which were written by the hand of God before the foundation of the world! and presented to the great Mahomet himself, the chosen of heaven, by the angel Gabriel!

We cannot, therefore, wonder that disbelief in the divine origin of the Korân is rapidly increasing; nay, it is even whispered among the elect, that the Sultan has of late years extended a greater share of his countenance towards his dejected Rayahs and the despised Giaours, than was consistent with the vicegerent of the prophet of the Lord; and some of the Stambouli Christians even venture to anticipate the possibility of their purer faith being, in some few years hence, adopted instead of the errors of Islamism.

Still, however we may condemn the degrading tendency and puerile absurdities found in that most luminous volume, which the Moslems call a "blaze of inspiration," there is a great deal that must command our admiration. For in-

stance, the adoration of the one, indivisible, eternal God, the simplicity of the rites, ceremonies, and form of worship, consisting of diurnal ablutions, public and private prayer, an annual festival and fast. If we contrast this absence of devotional pomp with the ever-recurring days of abstinence and holidays of the Roman and Greek churches, we must reluctantly acknowledge that Islamism, with all its faults, has in this respect the advantage.

Certain it is, that should the Turks at any future period be won over to embrace the tenets and conform to the observances of Christianity, it will never be to these forms of our faith above mentioned, abhorring as they do, with the bitterest feelings of dislike, not only statues and pictures, but the mediatorial prayers addressed to the virgin and saints.

In corroboration of the opinions I have here advanced, perhaps I may be permitted to mention, that during the various discussions I have had with my Turkish friends on religious subjects, they repeatedly expressed their surprise that Christianity contained any form of faith and worship so denuded of the extraneous and adventitious aids adopted by the Greek and Roman churches, as protestantism. And when I explained that the essence of Christianity con-

sisted in its simplicity, they openly and unhesitatingly acknowledged for it their warmest admiration.

May we not therefore infer, without being accused of entertaining visionary fancies, that if prudent and rational measures were adopted, a strong probability exists that this people might, in process of time, be converted to protestant Christianity ; more especially as they regard whatever emanates from England with strong feelings of partiality.

How devoutly will this be wished by every reflecting man, who has sojourned even but a brief space among the followers of Islamism ; for doctrines so futile and absurd, so calculated to promote sensuality and vice, can never form the code of belief and morals, without gradually undermining the nobler impulses of our nature. In short, the most eloquent satire upon the Mahometan religion, and the most striking exemplification of the words of our Saviour, " a tree is known by its fruits," is to be found in the character of the Turk of the nineteenth century.

That the passing traveller should be led to think favourably of Islamism, is very natural; for what can be more impressive than the solemn call of the muezzin from the tops of the minarets to prayer, which is repeated five times a day.

Indeed it is impossible that the soul should not be touched with devotion on hearing the sacred invitation addressed, not only to the children of the prophet, but the whole universe without limitation. And how sublimely devotional is the

"Come to prayer! come to prayer! come to the temple of salvation! Great God! Great God! I attest that there is no God but God! and Mahomet is the prophet of the Lord!"

How often did these words, uttered by a deep, sonorous, musical voice, fall on my ear in the still solitude of the morning, when, amidst the unbroken silence, the call to prayer appeared like a command from heaven; and how often, in my enthusiasm of admiration for this beautiful observance, have I been won into momentary forgetfulness of the fallacy of Mahomet's creed,—a creed, which the more we study, the more fully we are convinced of its absurdity, and that it was formed by the arch-deceiver for the purpose of ministering to his own selfish indulgences, and of facilitating his meditated conquests. In addition to its other evil consequences, no religion ever tended more to debase man as an intellectual being; the doctrine of fatalism being alone sufficient to benumb mental energy. What activity, what enterprise, can we expect from a man who considers himself to be a mere passive puppet, and most piously

believes that an endeavour to avert any threatened calamity, however imminent the danger, is a sin against heaven?

Every religious mind must therefore rejoice that Islamism is on the decline. May its fall be as rapid as its rise! and the conviction must force itself upon our minds, that a more than mortal will guides even the temporal concerns of this sublunary world; more especially when we behold the sudden, and to man inscrutable, reverses that take place in the destinies of nations, whose causes often elude the most laborious efforts of a finite intellect to trace. Yet we know that the chain of purposes is carried on by the unerring hand of the great Ruler of the Universe.

LETTER XIX.

MOUNT BULGURLU—SPLENDID PROSPECT—REFLECTIONS—TURKISH ILLUMINATIONS—SERAGLIO—MILITARY SCHOOL—CADETS—YOUNG KABARDIAN—RUSSIAN TRIUMPH.

BEFORE leaving Constantinople, I once more ascended Mount Bulgurlu, to the beautiful chiosk of the Sultan ; and however much we may admire the scenery, while wandering in the environs of this most picturesque capital, it is assuredly from that spot we can best appreciate its splendour.

Bulgurlu is scarcely two English miles from the superb Scutari, and is not difficult of access, donkeys and ponies being always in attendance for the accommodation of the traveller. How often, from that elevated situation, have I watched the rising and setting sun, as it poured its golden light over a landscape replete with every charm which could enter the imagination of a poet or an artist,—a landscape which memory will ever recal as the ideal of beauty, and which is, I believe, universally conceded by all travellers, possessed either of taste or feeling, to be one of the finest

in the world, whether we regard the materials composing it, or their felicitous combinations.

When tired of viewing the majestic panorama of Stamboul, its suburbs, and the glassy bay of the Golden Horn, we have only to look a little to the left, and gaze with delight upon the sea of Marmora, tranquilly sleeping like an immense lake; over whose shelving banks rises the lofty range of the snow-crowned Olympus, the council-chamber of Homer's conclave of the gods. Nor are these the only imposing features in this vast amphitheatre; for, by turning to the right from the sublime scenery of Asia Minor, you have the less grand but infinitely more lovely Bosphorus, winding its way like a stately river to the distant Euxine, through a succession of pictures made up of every object that can captivate the senses.

Perhaps you may think I have dwelt too much at length on the enchantments of this highly-favoured land; and yet I assure you I have restrained my raptures, lest you might accuse me of revelling too luxuriantly in scenic description; but with such a prospect, such a country, it is scarcely possible to control my language within the bounds of admiration. However, I may surely apologise by saying, that it would be an unpardonable omission were I to quit this lovely land without a few remarks on its scenery, which may

convey to the untravelled reader some idea of the external aspect of a country daily becoming more interesting from its situation and political relations.

While indulging in the contemplation of this glorious country, the theatre of so many important historical events, my mind recurred to scenes long since buried beneath the dust of ages. I thought of the ancient inhabitants of the capital of an empire, that could contend in arms with mighty Rome herself; of the Carthaginian chief, a solitary wanderer upon these shores; of the various powerful governments that have here held dominion—the Greeks, the Romans, and the Moslemins: I then mentally reverted to Sultan Mahmoud, his reforms, and endeavours to prop up his falling empire.

Here the warlike sons of ancient Rome, after wading through oceans of blood, planted their invincible eagle. But where are the magnificent amphitheatres of this daughter of imperial Rome? where are the triumphal arches—monuments of their numerous victories, the colossal Termes, splendid forum, innumerable statues, &c.? All have long since passed away: not a vestige remains even to tell of their existence.

We then see the pastoral tribes of Arabia, a hardy race, traverse the mountains of the Cauca-

sus, with their flocks and herds, under their patriarchal chief the virtuous Osman, subduing town after town, country after country, and finally planting the Crescent on the ruins of the Cross, and trampling in the dust the last descendant of the conquerors of the world. They have also degenerated beneath the enervating influence of this luxuriant land, which, like a beautiful courtesan, first captivates, and then destroys her victim. A country so happy in its situation, so fortunate in its climate, that it might serve for the residence of the gods, is yet, of every other upon the face of the globe, the most fatal to its possessors.

The last evening I visited Bulgurlu happened to be that of the grand Mahometan festival, *Courbann Bairem;* and, on my return, I was agreeably surprised to find the entire city, with its suburbs, brilliantly illuminated. Imagine the magical effect of festoons of many-coloured lamps suspended between the lofty minarets, around the numerous mosques, and decorating the different public edifices of the town; which, rising like an amphitheatre above each other, presented one blaze of undulating light, the whole beautifully mirrored in the crystal bosom of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn.

In addition to this, thousands of vessels in the

harbour were lighted up, which, together with the roaring of the cannon, the number of *caïks* darting to and fro, the shouts of the boatmen, and a cloudless sky glittering with myriads of stars, completed a picture which no capital in the world could parallel. It is true, I have repeatedly beheld illuminations in our own metropolis infinitely more magnificent: but it was the peculiar locality of Stamboul, the novel architecture of its edifices, the bright and glorious sky, which imparted to it the semblance of a creation that had risen into being beneath the wand of the enchanter.

The next day, my kind friend the editor of the *Moniteur Ottoman* accompanied me to the seraglio, the *entré* to which is considered a great favour. Here I had the pleasure of meeting with our intelligent countryman Dr. M——, one of the medical attendants of the Sultan. After passing through a few apartments, which do not offer a single object worthy of notice, I made a promenade in the gardens; badly laid out, and still worse kept, presenting nothing to admire, save a few cypresses and plane trees.

Here we were met by Achmet Pacha, who most courteously conducted us into an apartment splendidly furnished, in which the European and Oriental styles were blended with great taste. We were served with coffee, sherbet,

and some very excellent confectionary: but as I have before given you an account of this description of oriental entertainment in my interview with the Pacha of the Dardanelles, I have here nothing to add, except that this was quite as ceremonious, and more magnificent. The tchibouque of course followed; and as I looked out upon the Bosphorus, and listened to the Sultan's fine band of military music in the court-yard, I must confess that I never smoked a pipe under more agreeable circumstances.

After taking leave of our kind host, we passed on to the military school, situated in the third court, where the Osmanli cadets are educated in European tactics by Frank instructors, principally natives of Italy. Here I found everything indicated order, cleanliness, and good management; and as some of the youths were exercising, I was much pleased with the celerity and precision of their movements.

One of the Frank instructors pointed out a young Kabardian,* whose dexterity in gymnase, archery, and all kinds of military exercises, he highly extolled; adding, that he generally bore

* I should not have alluded to the young Kabardian, if it were not that he has already left Stamboul for the land of his fathers, and is consequently beyond the reach of Russian persecution.

off the prize from his young competitors. He is a fine youth, the son of a chieftain in the province of Kabardia, in the Caucasus, and a great favourite with the Sultan, who, notwithstanding his advanced age, equals the athletic mountaineer in the strength and vigour with which he draws a bow.

While conversing with the young Highlander upon the present state of his country, I was surprised at the enthusiastic tone of feeling he exhibited. His attachment to the land of his ancestors was unbounded; and his glowing description of the picturesque beauty of the country, the hospitality and friendly disposition of the inhabitants, increased the desire I had for some time entertained of visiting that most romantic of all countries—Circassia.

I was astonished at his eloquence, when expatiating upon the aggressive and unjust invasion of his country by Russia; and he exhibited all the fire of enthusiasm, as he anticipated the day when he should be at liberty to draw his sword in defence of the land of his ancestors; and, like all mountaineers, spoke with passionate fondness of his native hills.

His elegant manners, frankness, and, above all, intelligent conversation, for a youth of such limited opportunities of acquiring knowledge, entirely dissipated every fear I might have entertained as

to venturing among the inhabitants of a country usually supposed to be little better than barbarians. On learning my intention, he gave me an amulet, assuring me that, on presenting it to his father, I should be received as a friend; also, on my arrival in the country, that the mention of his father's name to his compatriots would insure my safety in every part of the country through which I might travel. To the facilities thus so unexpectedly afforded, it was chiefly owing that I abandoned my intended tour through Hungary, and now decided, if possible, to explore the countries of the Caucasus.

On leaving the military school, we found the Sultan, with a numerous cortege of officers, in the court-yard; together with the Russian ambassador, M. Bouténeff, accompanied by Madame Nariskin and several Russians of high rank, who had lately arrived to see "the lions of Stamboul." This was indeed a proud day for Russia; as the great Padishah of all the Osmanlis himself descended from his high dignity, and, in opposition to established custom, publicly paid his respects to the Giaour lady, expressing his hope, through the medium of a dragoman, that she had found everything in the capital agreeable to her wishes; and concluded by saying, that he trusted she would present his regards to the emperor, his most faithful ally!

LETTER XX.

TURKISH MILITARY—SULTAN MAHMOUD—HIS ACTIVITY—PASSION FOR MILITARY EXERCISES—THE YOUNG TURKISH PRINCES—THEIR EDUCATION—THE REFORMS OF THE SULTAN—DIFFICULTIES OF HIS SITUATION—RUSSIAN PROTECTION—ENFEEBLED STATE OF THE TURKISH EMPIRE—ADVANTAGES OF TURKISH COMMERCE TO ENGLAND.

PERHAPS one of the most interesting among Sultan Mahmoud's plans for improving and civilising his people, is that of disciplining his army on the European system. Habited in his European uniform, he is to be seen day after day, like Peter of Russia or Frederick the Great, drilling and manœuvring his troops, being perfectly conscious that it is only by a well-organised army the integrity of his empire can be maintained. Comfortable barracks are built for them; they receive regular pay and rations; consequently are no longer the marauding bandits who preyed upon their fellow-citizens for subsistence only a few years since.

The men perform their evolutions with tolerable precision, particularly when we consider the want of good officers, more especially subalterns and non-commissioned officers. As to the Sultan himself, I have frequently seen him manœuvre a squadron of horse with as much skill as one of our own most accomplished cavalry officers. He is equally admirable as an equestrian; hence it is, when riding *à l'Européenne*, that he appears to the greatest advantage, his whole style and bearing being that of a soldier.

His personal appearance is also in his favour: his full jet-black beard and curling mustachios impart decision and boldness to a countenance still handsome; his eye is large and serious, with the oriental arched eyebrow, which, together with the proud expression of his mouth and general dignified demeanour, realises the idea of the man in whose veins runs the noblest blood of Asia—the monarch of the nation who planted the Crescent in Europe. Although from his age he may be said to be already verging towards the decline of life, his countenance still glows with health, which he owes to his passion for military exercises and constant exposure to the open air.

How different from the triste expression and effeminate appearance which distinguished him in early life, and indeed that of his ancestors for

centuries; who, enervated by the debasing vices of the seraglio, and living in hourly dread of being massacred by a band of lawless ruffians, more resembling criminals doomed to destruction than the monarchs of a mighty empire: whereas their more fortunate descendant now gallops through the streets of Stamboul, or glides in his splendid *kachamba* over the Bosphorus, with as little danger of falling by the hand of the assassin as the most popular monarch of civilised Europe.

The Sultan, during his excursions, is frequently accompanied by his two sons, fine-spirited young men, who are trained to every manly athletic exercise calculated to give energy and activity to the frame; nor is the culture of their minds less diligently attended to, their education being superintended by men eminent for their talents and learning. They have also an enlightened preceptor in their father, who is a member of the republic of letters, and has composed some fine martial music: with such aids we may confidently predict that the future monarch of Turkey, unless some unforeseen event should intervene, will tread in the footsteps of his reforming predecessor. In order still more to expand the minds and increase the knowledge of the young princes, it is even contemplated to add the advantage of foreign

travel; and, under the protection of their august parent, it is intended, this or the following year, that they shall visit the Grecian islands in the Archipelago. This infringement of the laws of the Korân shows a strong determination on the part of Mahmoud to emancipate himself from its trammels, the code of the Prophet expressly forbidding the monarchs of Turkey, or any member of the imperial family, to quit the empire, except for the purpose of exterminating the infidels with fire and sword.

Thus, in open violation of this command, we shall in all probability, at no distant period, see the heir to the throne of the Crescent travelling in Europe, and even visiting London. I assure you this is no common rumour, and how much is it to be desired! The young prince will thus, indeed, have an opportunity of laying up a store of useful knowledge wherewith to enlighten his benighted people.

Must we not then concede, that the illustrious chief who now wields the destinies of this much-fallen empire is a man of no common mind? and that if he is spared to his country only a few years longer, and permitted by the fanatic priest to continue his career of reform, Turkey may yet be regenerated? And assuredly the wisdom and good feeling exhibited in the evening of his reign,

will shed a light over the darker shades that clouded his early days. If we review his political life with any degree of severity, we must reluctantly confess that his character is stained by many acts which truth will oblige the historian to stigmatise, not only as tyrannical, but cruel. However, in private life, it is universally admitted that he is a sincere friend, an affectionate father, and a kind master; and when we take into account the difficulties of his position, his imperfect education, and the character of the people over whom he reigns, we shall feel inclined to make many allowances in his favour.

Sultan Mahmoud has had, indeed, serious obstacles to contend with, powerful enemies to overcome; the destruction of the Janissaries will alone hand down his name to the latest posterity, and the numerous reforms he has effected in the institutions of his country will for ever entitle him to her gratitude. He has found means completely to curb the ambition and rapacity of the Pachas: previous to the restrictions he imposed upon them, the power they wielded was nearly absolute, extending even to life and death. Bribery is now denounced, extortion and violence punished with the severest rigour, and in the courts of justice, formerly so corrupt, a better system of administration has been established.

Laws have been enacted, insuring the regular descent of hereditary property; and a noble example of disinterested regard to justice has been set by the monarch himself, who has for ever waived the right of the crown to the property of its deceased ministers and Pachas, formerly grasped with eagerness by the reigning Sultans, —a source from which emanated many revolting crimes. By the imposition of a regular tax, the degraded rayah, the citizen, shopkeeper, and agriculturist, are no longer exposed to the rapacity of hordes of extortioners in authority.

In addition to these, there is now a printing-press in Stamboul, which furnishes a newspaper and books for the intellectual wants of the people. Military schools have been established, national guards formed; and it is to be hoped that the institution of a regular disciplined army will have the effect of suppressing revolution at home, and of exciting awe and respect in the enemies of Turkey abroad.

Still there is much to be done; for although the lawless band exist no more, whose atrocities will long be remembered with horror, another band more powerful remains to be subdued—the priests. These, armed with the book of the Prophet and the law, possessed of spiritual and temporal power, of intelligence and cunning, interpose a

serious obstacle to the work of the reforming monarch; and until this gigantic mass of prejudice and superstition is dislocated, and their exclusive privileges abrogated, the civilisation of Turkey will be retarded.

But to return to the military, here called the *tacticoes*. I cannot think that the Sultan has done wisely in substituting for his army their present unbecoming uniform instead of their ancient costume, so well adapted to the customs and manners of the people.* The *féz* is anything but an appropriate head-dress, being an indifferent defence against the inclemency of the weather or a sabre cut; and the curtailment of the wide Turkish trowsers from their sufficing amplitude of proportion, as worn by the Osmanlis of old, has had the effect of displaying their bandy legs, a deformity frequently met with among the inhabitants of the East, and which very naturally results from the position in which they sit. Assuredly they would have made quite as good soldiers, if their more elegant and national costume had been retained;

* I understand from good authority that the Sultan, aware of the inappropriateness of the present uniform of his troops, intends, after some little time, to restore the old Turkish costume, the other having only been adopted for the purpose of preparing his people to receive the more extensive reforms he meditates in their manners and customs.

whereas, in their present dress, they appear the very ghosts of their fierce ancestors; and those men, who now appear to the eye of a European military man an uncouth set of ragamuffins, with legs and neck uncovered, and shuffling *papooshes*, would, if habited in the ample folds of the turban, loose robe confined by a crimson shawl filled with pistols and poniard, be as martial and fine-looking fellows as ever followed the standard of the Prophet.

Although the exertions of the Sultan have, when we consider how short a space of time has elapsed since he commenced his reforms, produced a striking effect on the military, the mass of the people have not improved in the same degree; neither has their advancement kept pace with the activity displayed by their enterprising ruler to regenerate them; for, with the exception of the youths in the military schools, we rarely see any demonstrations of real national enthusiasm. Sometimes, indeed, we find a few daring spirits anxious to measure their swords with the hated Muscov's; but in general the Turks of the present day are characterised by apathy and indolence, frequently exhibiting an attachment to effeminate vices, which render them objects of contempt to a high-spirited European. Whether we visit their fortifications,

arsenals, or ships of war, we see the same torpid neglect, the same want of energy. Nor is the fine military *tenue* and bold bearing of the troops by any means calculated to strike terror into the hearts of the enemies of Turkey. Besides the general slovenly appearance of the men, and the want of sufficient respect evinced by the privates towards their superior officers, there is no attention whatever paid to dressing the lines, for we often see the most meagre man in the company placed, as if for the purpose of looking ridiculous, in juxtaposition with the most corpulent, and a mere dwarf flanking a giant. However insignificant these trifles may appear in detail, yet be assured their effect upon the appearance of the troops is anything but favourable; and their influence upon the spectator accustomed to the well-drilled troops of Europe, produces no other feeling than contempt for an army composed of such materials. But it is while marching that the tacticoes look least soldier-like; and I verily believe that the best drillmaster in Europe could not completely wean an Osmanli from the intolerable shuffle and strut so peculiar to that people when in locomotion.

Notwithstanding the martial bearing of the tactico is not calculated to command our admiration, he is not without his good qualities as

a soldier; he is more patient in adversity, and hardier in his habits, than the European; and his utter contempt for all the comforts of life cannot be too highly prized. His bed, which is composed of nothing better than a strip of carpet, or a mat, with a coverlet made from camel or goats' hair, serves him alike in the camp and in the barrack; while one tremendous caldron, cooks pilaw sufficient for the wants of a whole company. And when these are provided for him, which formerly was not always the case, he is as happy, and it may be happier, than the well-fed, well-lodged soldier of Europe.

The want of a well-organised medical staff is one of the most glaring deficiencies in the Turkish army; for the disciple of Mahomet, with all his fatalism, his determination to oppose misfortune with apathy, and pain with stoicism, would certainly speedily become sensible of the advantages of skilful medical treatment. That it would be impossible to form an efficient medical board from the natives is most certain, and to resort entirely to foreigners would involve many difficulties; still it must be wished that something effective could be attempted to relieve the sufferings of the sick and wounded in the next war in which the Turks may be engaged.

Nor is a medical staff the only desideratum of

the Turkish army; for the absence of a well-conducted *état-major* is also seriously felt; a defect which exposes it to all the evils resulting from mismanagement and irregularity,—evils which would be increased a hundredfold in time of war. Of this the Sultan is well aware; but, owing to the ignorance and incapability of his agents, every attempt he has hitherto made to remedy it has failed. Again, the majority of the European instructors of the army are men whose character for military talent does not rank high; and as the Sultan, notwithstanding his firmness, has yielded to the solicitations of his people to be commanded only by officers professing Islamism, the Turks are not likely to make any very rapid progress in the military tactics of Europe.

But this is not all: the *protecting ally* of the Sultan fearing, I suppose, that the ward should become too formidable for the guardian, never fails to discover a thousand objections, grounded on the real or supposed political opinions of every man of acknowledged military talent who has yet offered his services to the Turkish army. It is true the Grand Seigneur sometimes assumes a tone of independence, and we hear that the influence of his most faithful cousin is on the wane—that the counsels of England prevail; the drooping spirits of the patriots are raised, when

lo! the whole of the boasts of the Sultan's manliness evaporate at once before the simple nod of the *little man* in his castle at Buyuk-déré. How can it be otherwise? The net of political intrigue is drawn too closely round the helpless victim to permit his escape: conscious of his weakness, and so often deserted by those whose interests are identified with his own, he is obliged to yield, unless he would see anarchy triumphant at home, and the enemy crossing his frontier.

In my notices on the present state of the Turkish empire, I regret that I cannot colour my representations according to my wishes; for notwithstanding Sultan Mahmoud has effected many important ameliorations in the social and political state of his people, we must be of the opinion, that unless he receives the most effectual aid and judicious counsel from the great European powers, interested from political motives in maintaining the independence of the Ottoman Porte, he will not be able, with all his patriotic exertions, to protect his country from the insidious designs of Russia; a power now more to be feared than at any other period, since she has assumed the title of *Protector of Turkey*; and how ominous of evil is that title, Krim-Tartary, Georgia, Mingrelia, and the other ex-

tensive countries on the Black Sea, can testify by bitter experience; for to them she also extended her *protection* till they became successively incorporated as fiefs of her mighty empire.

The numerous hordes of Nogay Tartars, Kara-Kaitack Tartars, Calmucks, and Kümucks, with a host of other wandering tribes of Tartars, too insignificant to mention in their distinctive appellations, and which inhabited the vast tracts of Besserabia, the banks of the Kouban, the Wolga, the Sea of Azow, the Caspian, and the Black Sea,—now exist no more! The Nogay Tartars alone, under their last Sultan, Battei-Gherai, numbered fifty thousand fighting men, so late as the year 1780. The Tourgouth Tartars, more sagacious than their short-sighted brethren, in order to avoid the fate they saw impending, emigrated to China with their flocks and herds, to the amount of half a million of men! What a solemn warning should this be to Sultan Mahmoud, and the Asiatic Princes on the frontiers of Russia, and how cautious should they be of relying on the faith, or the promises, of a power that knows no satiety in its territorial acquisitions! In all probability Poland, like Krim-Tartary, should no political event frustrate the intention of the sovereigns of Russia,

will, ere another half century has passed over, also become so completely amalgamated with the empire of its invaders, as to destroy every hope of its re-erection into an independent monarchy.

But to return to the subject we are now more immediately discussing, Turkey; centuries of despotism and barbarous misrule have operated the effect that might have been anticipated — national feebleness. How then is it possible that the exertions of one individual however great, the energies of one man however powerful, can immediately infuse vigour and courage into its demoralised inhabitants? We have already seen the Sangiac-sheriff displayed by the present Sultan without being responded to by the wonted enthusiasm of the disciples of Mahomet; if, then, the sacred standard has failed in arousing the energies of the Turk of our day, we fear that European tactics will also fail in making heroes of a people destitute of public spirit.

Without adverting to the ruinous state of the finances of the country, decay and wretchedness unfortunately characterise the whole of this immense empire, whether we wander in Europe or Asia. Where, then, are her resources to defend her independence, or carry on a protracted struggle in case of a war with Russia? We may

therefore be assured that Turkey must eventually succumb either to the open violence or crafty arts of her wily enemy, unless she becomes closely allied to some European power, who has sufficient sagacity to defeat her intrigues, and sufficient resources to defy her threats: and what power, when we consider our Asiatic possessions, and the menacing attitude assumed towards us by Russia, is more interested in maintaining the independence of Turkey than England herself?

Indeed, it is surprising how Sultan Mahmoud has been able single-handed to procrastinate the final fall of his empire even to the present day, when we consider the loss of his fine fleet at Navarino, and the numerous difficulties with which he is beset: pressed on one side by the demoralising influence of Russian intrigues, and on the other by the open rebellion of the viceroy of Egypt, Mehemet Ali. Besides all this, there is hardly a Turk, rich or poor, that does not lead a life of indolence owing to the insecure tenure of property under former rulers and the rapacity of a host of pachas and governors of provinces. With a soil rich to exuberance, Sultan Mahmoud is doomed to see his subjects obliged to purchase grain from their neighbours. With seas open at all hours, with

ports protected from every wind of heaven, where are his merchantmen, that nursery so necessary to man his fleet in the event of war?

In addition to this he must reluctantly witness the whole of the commerce, that ought to enrich his own people, pass through the hands of speculative foreigners, who cannot have any patriotic feelings for a country in which they are allowed, owing to the fanaticism and exclusiveness of the disciples of Mahomet, so small a share of interest; remaining for ever, with their descendants, strangers in the land which gave them birth.

During the few years the olive branch has been waving over this devoted empire, it must be confessed that our trade has considerably increased, but it is by no means equal to what it ought to be when we consider the number of British merchants resident in all the principal trading towns; the commercial enterprise of the English nation in general; the population of Turkey, its want of manufactures, and the facilities it offers to commerce by means of the number of seas, with their fine ports and harbours, that abound in every part of the country. With all these advantages, I cannot but think that we have shown great supineness in not availing ourselves of our position, weight,

and influence, to form a commercial alliance* with the Ottoman Porte; for let it be remembered that our trade with the Turkish Empire is extremely profitable, subjected to little or no obstruction, entirely carried on in our own ships, and it must be conceded that in no part of the world is the trader, or even the traveller, exposed to fewer inconveniences.

Independently of any selfish considerations, a more extensive commerce would produce most beneficial effects upon the character and industry of the Turkish people; and if a reciprocal feeling of good-will were encouraged, it would probably be highly instrumental in working the salvation of the much-debased empire of the Ottoman. The Turks would then, assured of the support at least of one of the great christian

* Since these volumes have appeared, a commercial alliance, highly favourable to England, has been concluded with the Ottoman Porte, which reflects the highest credit upon our government, and upon the diplomatic talent of Lord Ponsonby, our ambassador at Constantinople. A commercial alliance which, it is to be hoped, will have the effect of counteracting the designs of Russia on the independence of Turkey, of civilising the inhabitants, and of reviving the kindly feeling with which the Turks have ever regarded their ancient, may I not add, their natural ally, England. Indeed the activity recently displayed by her Majesty's minister of foreign affairs in every subject relating to the East, the

powers, be aroused from the listless apathy into which they have fallen, and again become, as of old, the fierce defenders of their country, and the resistless enemy of that only European power that seeks to rob them of their independence.

remonstrances addressed by Mr. M'Neil, our envoy to the Schah of Persia, respecting Herat, the movement of British troops towards the frontier of Persia, the junction of the Ottoman and English fleets last summer in the Turkish Seas, together with the late commercial treaties entered into with Austria, seem to warrant the hope that no means will be left untried to arrest the aggression of Russia, and thereby defeat the plans of an insidious enemy, who has been long secretly endeavouring to undermine our power and prosperity in every part of the world.

LETTER XXI.

DEPARTURE FOR ODESSA—THE BOSPHORUS—STEAM-BOAT—PASSENGERS—KARAITE JEWS—SERPENTS' ISLAND—LEGENDS CONNECTED WITH IT—ARRIVAL AT ODESSA—LORD DURHAM—HIS SILENT RECEPTION AT ODESSA—INDIGNATION—LAZARETTO—RUSSIAN DINNER—ITALIAN OPERA—SIGNOR MARINI—HOTEL DE RICHELIEU.

It has been already said, and with truth, that travellers are the slaves of circumstances. As for myself, I must confess that I have rarely found my route to correspond with my original intentions: and now, having received an invitation to visit South Russia, before my departure for Circassia, I am about to avail myself of the steam-boat conveyance to Odessa. Therefore I must, for the present, terminate my sketches of Stamboul and the Osmanlis.

I hope, however, on my return, to be able to give you more interesting details; as I shall then have extended my tour over a larger portion of the Turkish empire, become more familiar with the inhabitants, and better enabled to contrast

the actual state and resources of the country with that of its ambitious neighbour: unless, indeed, I should be detained as a slave; or, as my Russian friends prophesy, roasted as a delicate morsel in honour of some grand national festival!

The evening I left Stamboul, the weather was remarkable for its loveliness; and as our vessel wound her way to the Euxine, through the Bosphorus, the unruffled surface of that beautiful channel reflected the whole firmament, and gave back in softened tints the ever-varying colours of the departing sun, which still glowed in the west. Not a cloud darkened the heavens, and every breath of the light, balmy air, seemed to fan creation to repose; and I do not think I ever experienced, in a greater degree, that peculiar buoyancy which this delightful climate inspires: it seemed to impart health to the pulse, and elasticity to the spirit.

My voyage was, indeed, most agreeable; for, with the exception of a slight thunder-storm, the weather continued uninterruptedly fine till we arrived at Odessa.* The captain of the steamer was an Englishman, of the name of Covey, which surprised me the more, for his vessel (Russian

* The fare, from Constantinople to Odessa, is a hundred and fifty paper roubles.

built,) was by no means kept in that neat order and regularity which usually characterise our compatriots at home and abroad. He, however, excused himself by saying, that it was impossible to preserve order in a vessel manned by Russians, whom he represented as lazy, stupid, and obstinate.

On descending into the cabin, I found the Russian ambassador, M. Bouténeff, and a large party of Russian nobles with their families. His excellency—however much he may be opposed to English interests, in private life, is an amiable and excellent man, did not accompany us any farther than his country seat at Buyukderè, on the Bosphorus. There was also Madame Nariskin, and her suite, a nephew of General Nariskin, and their medical attendant, M. Titus Vanzetti, an intelligent young man, an Italian, and author of several clever professional works: and I was not more pleased than astonished to behold among the passengers, my old *compagnon de voyage*, the Hungarian nobleman, from whose originality of character I was certain to derive much amusement. He was now, notwithstanding his late hydrophobical horror of water, again about to resign himself to the protection of the naïads, his fears of the plague, which had just made its appearance in Constantinople, being

greater than his dread of shipwreck; as, in his haste to escape, he could not even wait a few days for the return of the Danube steam-boat, but took the more circuitous route of returning home by Odessa.

Upon the whole, I was much pleased with the appearance of my companions, and flattered myself with the hope of a pleasant voyage, in which I was not disappointed. There were, besides, a variety of other characters that emerged from the second cabin, a motley tribe enough of Greeks, Jews, and Armenian traders; all more or less interesting, from their habits and manners, to a stranger.

I was particularly struck with a gaunt, ill-favoured-looking Karaite Jew, and his wife, a very pretty woman, apparently not more than sixteen, the magnificence of whose attire would have done honour to a Sultana. Yet, though the lady's dress was valued by my fellow-passengers to at least three or four thousand roubles, still, in singular contrast with this external splendour, she and her husband lived on the contents of a basket they brought with them, consisting of the plainest food, and appeared total strangers to everything like domestic comfort. In order to avoid the trifling expense of a berth in the second cabin, they slept during the night

on a pallet, exposed to the dews of heaven ; and amused themselves by day with occasionally disencumbering their persons of certain little creeping plagues, whose name out of respect to my fair readers I forbear to mention.

I cannot, however, part from the dark-eyed Jewess without giving you a description of her dress, the possession of which would have made the hearts of many of the daughters of Eve dance with joy. We shall commence with her head-dress, composed of a sort of turban embroidered with gold, from which a chain of pearls was suspended across her forehead, that nearly touched her eyebrows. A purple velvet jacket, over a white silk dress, embroidered with gold, enveloped her form ; and a massive gold chain, of the most exquisite workmanship, several times encircled her neck ; while bracelets of the same material, enriched with precious stones, superb earrings, and a multitude of rings on her fingers, completed her costume, and showed that her husband, at least, did not regard expense in adorning his pretty little *cara sposa*.

When within six or seven hours' voyage of Odessa, we fell in with the current of the Danube, and immediately after passed Serpents' Island, the only one in the Black Sea ; from the view we obtained, it appeared about an English mile and a half long, and principally composed

of barren cliffs with little or no vegetation, which form a secure retreat for great numbers of sea-birds, and no doubt originated its ancient name, Leuce (white island).

It appears to have been an object of great interest to the ancients. Some affirm it was sacred to Achilles, and given him by Thetis; at all events, it contained his statue, and a temple dedicated to his worship. Pindar called it the "Conspicuous Island:" Euripides, "the White Shores of Achilles:" while Strabon and Arrien described it as Leuce, the "White Island," which name it still retains, in conjunction with its modern appellation, "Serpents' Island." Various absurd reports and traditions are current among the Greek, Russian, and Turkish mariners that navigate this sea; the most generally credited being, that it is infested by supernatural serpents of enormous size, which keep guard over boundless treasures, and devour every human being who has the temerity to land. Strange to say, we find in the Records of Ammianus Marcellinus, that a similar belief existed even in his days.

So firmly, indeed, is this superstitious opinion impressed upon the mariners of the Black Sea at the present time, that not a single man belonging to the crew of any ship would venture to

trust his safety to the mercy of the hissing inhabitants of "Serpents' Island."

As a land-mark, the island is of great service to the mariner, in consequence of the fogs which frequently hang over this part of the Black Sea, and the lowness of the coasts about the mouths of the Danube. Even when the atmosphere is hazy, the friendly snow-white plumage of the birds, which continually hover around, proclaims its vicinity: hence its original name Leuce, (white island,) appears peculiarly appropriate.

At the expiration of fifty hours, we arrived at Odessa, which at first sight somewhat reminded me of Brighton. The fine range of noble buildings on the cliffs, including the palace of the governor, resembled the Marine Parade: nor was the likeness diminished by the total absence of foliage; for the miserable acacias on the Boulevards, the only trees, by-the-bye, that flourish in this inhospitable soil, are not sufficient to relieve the white glare of the buildings.

I had now to undergo the tedium of fourteen days' quarantine; but being favoured with the society of several friends, I passed my time as agreeably as my temporary confinement would admit, for owing to the frequent visits Odessa has had from the plague, the quarantine regulations are severely enforced. Nor were they relaxed

even in favour of Lord Durham, who passed through this town, on his route to St. Petersburg, some time previous to my arrival.

His lordship's visit, however, had the effect of sadly discomposing the authorities, and affording subject matter of conversation to the quiet people of Odessa for months; for when the vessel arrived in the port with our well-known red-cross banner, she fired the usual salute, announcing that the representative of Great Britain was on board; when lo! the guns of the fort were silent: the salute was repeated; still the same portentous silence. Even our consul-general was silent: for the very good reason, he happened to be absent. Here was dishonour to the flag of the greatest nation in the world! His lordship stormed, the captain stamped with rage; even the least choleric among the officers thought the conduct of the Russians extraordinary.

What could be the reason? was echoed by all on board. Perhaps the insult was personal; perhaps his lordship, as chief of all the radicals, was not a palatable representative to the chief of all the despots.

At length, the officers of the quarantine made their appearance, and not being prepared to offer a satisfactory explanation, his lordship penned a spirited remonstrance, not a little tinged with

anger, to the governor-general; in which the insults and indignities he had received were energetically and eloquently set forth.

The effect of the missive was electrical; governor-general, commander of the forces, officers, consul, vice-consul, all were in dismay, for they knew to appease the ire of an angry man is not an easy undertaking. However, on explaining the real cause, namely, that it was against the port regulations to give or return a salute later than seven in the evening, (his lordship having arrived after that hour,) the storm subsided, like the clouds retiring from the face of the sun; and his majesty's representative most graciously condescended to receive every attention, courtesy, and honour that could possibly be rendered by the authorities to an ambassador. Indeed, no disrespect could have been intended by the authorities of Odessa; for Lord Durham is, I understand, a great favourite with the emperor and the court of St. Petersburg.

The quarantine establishment is altogether well conducted. The situation, on the summit of a chain of small hills, is not only healthy but pleasant, commanding as it does a fine view of the sea, which here forms an extensive bay. The different suites of apartments are so extensive, as almost to form a little town; each separate tene-

ment has its small court planted with acacias: besides this, we had a public promenade, a restaurant, and a conversation-room. So that you see the Russian government have endeavoured to render the confinement as little irksome as detention can be to a traveller.

Still it must be observed, that the traveller who arrives here unprovided with a bed and other comforts, will find himself condemned to experience many inconveniences; unless he is, as was my own case, possessed of kind friends, who supplied me with everything I could desire, including what was indeed most welcome,—not only the latest English periodical publications, but some of the latest daily papers; and I should be wanting in common gratitude, were I not to express how deeply I feel indebted to Count Worrenzow, and General Leon and Madame Nariskin, for their very friendly and polite attentions.

Having been engaged, on my emancipation from my temporary confinement, to dine with General Nariskin, I will give you the ceremonial of a Russian dinner; which after all differs in no respect from our own, except that the gentlemen do not sit after dinner to enjoy a little political chit-chat over a bottle of wine; and previous to passing into the *salle à manger*, the company are served with caviare, anchovy sandwiches, olives,

and *liqueur* glasses of brandy, with the intention of creating an appetite. The conversation was generally carried on in French, for it appears that the Russian language is not fashionable among the high-born aristocrats of this country; and I could not help noticing the facility with which many of the party spoke several European languages. This aptitude as linguists, I have always found to characterise the Russian people; and out of a large party now assembled, the greater number addressed me in English, with only a very slight foreign accent. You may, therefore, easily imagine what an advantage this accomplishment confers upon a Russian, when engaged in affairs of diplomacy.

In the evening, I accompanied my host and his family to the Italian Opera, *Il Furioso:* the character of the "maniac" was well performed by Signor Marini, who would have done honour to the theatre of a capital; and the elegance of the scenery, dresses, and decorations, showed that the inhabitants of Odessa fully appreciate the charms of the drama.

During the few days I remained in Odessa, I took up my quarters at the Hôtel de Richelieu, an establishment for which the traveller is indebted to Count Worrenzow, who built and furnished it at his own expense; it being the

custom in this country for travellers to carry with them the whole of the articles necessary for the table and couch, particularly the latter: consequently, previous to this, strangers arriving in Odessa were condemned to suffer much inconvenience. I found the charges at the hotel moderate, the attendants civil: the obliging politeness of the French landlord apparent in every trifling act of courtesy; and the cleanliness of his wife, a native of Germany, visible throughout the house.

INTERIOR OF A TARTAR COTTAGE.

LETTER XXII.

STEAM-BOAT VOYAGE TO YALTA—ENGLISH MATE—FIRST ASPECT OF KRIM TARTARY—DISAPPOINTMENT—MONASTERY OF ST. GEORGE—ITS GREAT ANTIQUITY—BALACLAVA—ALOUPKA—SCENERY—VILLAS OF THE RUSSIAN NOBILITY—IMPROVED ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY—ARRIVAL AT YALTA.

It is very seldom, in this world of crosses and disappointments, that mortal man finds cause to be grateful to his planets; but I certainly feel bound formally to return thanks to mine, for conducting me at this juncture to Odessa, as immediately on my arrival, Count Worrenzow, governor-general of South Russia, invited me in the most friendly manner to accompany him on a coasting expedition round the Black Sea.

I took my departure in the steam-boat, or, as it is here called, the *periscap*, for Yalta in the Crimea, the count having gone thither to make arrangements for the voyage. The periscap is a pretty little vessel, English built; the mate and engineer were also English, the former *de facto* the captain; but being unacquainted with the Russian language, the proprietors had given the nominal command to a person, who had no other qualification save that which the Englishman wanted. Hence, their friendship was about as ardent as that which may be supposed to exist between the pet wife of a Turkish Effendi, who calls herself mamma of half a dozen turbaned cherubs, and the other dear pet who is denied the privilege of having one.

So long, however, as this problematical friendship was confined to words, or rather violent pantomimic gestures, the passengers were not much annoyed; but when they proceeded to more active demonstrations, we could have wished that the duties and the name of captain had been confided to the same person.

The majority of the passengers were Russian noblemen, on their way to join the party of the count on his coasting expedition, with a few of the citizens of Odessa to take a summer's ramble in the mountains of the Crimea; that country be-

ing denominated, by the admirers of its scenery, the Switzerland of South Russia.

The first aspect of the Crimea does not correspond with the exaggerated description I had received from my Russian friends; who, accustomed to the monotonous steppes that characterise the greatest part of the Moscovite empire, are in raptures at the very sight of a mountain, and magnify these that skirt the south coast of the peninsula into stupendous Alps, replete with every feature that can constitute a landscape at once sublime and picturesque. This is so far from being the fact, that the scenery presents nothing better than a range of lofty hills, composed of black rock and volcanic-like peaks, descending precipitously to the sea, with scarcely a span of land between them and the water's edge, exhibiting merely here and there a patch of underwood, intermingled with broad masses of burnt-up scoria-like matter.

These characteristics are aggravated to the eye of the traveller while coasting; for then the few trees look like shrubs, and the vaunted Alps dwindle into low hills. Indeed, it is not till we arrive at the convent dedicated to St. George, romantically situated on the brow and summit of projecting and apparently inaccessible rocks, that the landscape presents anything like a picturesque object.

This monastery, still inhabited by a society of monks of the Greek religion, is composed of a pretty-looking church, refectory, and several detached cottages with terraced gardens; and if we may credit the accounts generally received, is deeply interesting to the historian and antiquarian, for we are assured that it occupies the site of the temple of Diana, the *Orestea Dea* of Ovid, and the demon virgin of Strabon. This supposition is founded upon the writings of Strabon and Herodotus, and the monks pretend to have discovered the pedestal that supported the golden statue of the goddess, together with the identical rock upon which the priestess Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon, reposed, while meditating a favourable moment to immolate her brother. This famous temple is mentioned in the Iliad, which tells us that all the unfortunate mariners shipwrecked on the shores of this inhospitable country, were sacrificed to the insatiable goddess.

Soon after passing the convent, we came in sight of the fine bay and castellated heights of Balaclava, now for the most part a heap of ruins. This town was described by Strabon, when treating of the Taurica Chersonesus, as the Portus Symbolorum, when it formed one of the principal cities of the Heracleotic peninsula. On the destruction of that independent state Balaclava

remained in ruins till the establishment of the Genoese in the Crimea, who, sensible of the value of the bay as a port, rebuilt the town, fortified the adjoining heights, and gave their new creation the name of Bella-Clava, (the beautiful port,) since corrupted to Balaclava. Under the rule of the Genoese, one of the most enterprising and commercial people of the middle ages, it again enjoyed a long career of prosperity, until their expulsion from the Crimea by the Turks, who plundered the town and left it in ruins; and thus it has remained till the present day.

This beautiful bay has the appearance of a lovely river winding through the mountains, being about an English mile in length, and at its greatest breadth not more than a quarter of a mile, and so narrow at the entrance as scarcely to afford a passage for two moderate-sized vessels to pass abreast. The anchorage is everywhere safe, with a depth of water sufficient to receive the largest ships; while the surrounding hills afford a never-failing protection against every wind, however violent.

Still, notwithstanding the bay of Balaclava offers these very peculiar advantages, and is in every respect so admirably calculated for a commercial harbour, yet the entrance is not only closed against foreign vessels, but even those carrying the Russian flag: it being presumed

by the long-headed minister at St. Petersburg, that the position of the bay and the mountainous character of the country afford facilities to illicit traffic too tempting to be resisted; and it was only very recently that Count Worrenzow obtained the sanction of the government to permit vessels in stress of weather to seek here shelter and safety. The measure was the more imperative, as this part of the coast of the peninsula presents a range of abrupt cliffs, most dangerous to the mariner in tempestuous weather, and too often fatal before the security of this haven was afforded.

On approaching Aloupka, the scenery continued to improve in beauty; nay, it might almost be termed sublime. Rocks lay piled upon rocks in chaotic disorder, over which rose in lofty grandeur the gigantic mountain Ai Petri, three thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea. There was also a greater appearance of fertility than I had previously witnessed: the whole space between the towering cliffs and the sea, forming a splendid panorama, presented one mass of the richest foliage; terraced vineyards adorned the hills, mingling their lighter green with the dark cold pine of the mountain; while the miniature valleys beneath glowed with the clustering cots of the Tartars, and their pretty little mosques and slender minarets.

Nor were these the only interesting features in this highly-favoured spot; for here and there were to be seen the neat villa, well-kept garden, and tiny park of the wealthy Russian noble. There was also the magnificent chateau of Count Worrenzow with its castellated towers, which seemed to look proudly down on its more humble neighbours, in all the feudal grandeur of by-gone days.

Indeed, the whole of the country between Aloupka and the port of Yalta, which we were now fast approaching, is the most beautiful and fertile on the south coast of the Crimea; and having the advantage of being protected from the cold northern winds by the high mountains, the climate is mild, and considered highly favourable to the health of invalids. Here the fruits of more southern climes attain the highest perfection; therefore you cannot be surprised to hear that every spot is cultivated to its highest capabilities. The very rocks have been converted into gardens and vineyards, and carriage-roads and avenues conducted, at a great expense and labour, along the shelving sides of the hills to the dizzy heights above.

The most distinguished country seats of the Russian nobility pointed out to me, were those of General Leon Nariskin, Prince Galitzin, and

Count de Witt; and as these gentlemen were then at their villas, they welcomed us as we passed with successive discharges of cannon, and at the same time the banner of each family, in true baronial style, was instantaneously unfurled.

Our vessel now made a slight detour, and ran in to the pretty curving bay of Yalta. Here we were again received with a deafening salute from the shore, and also from the Russian ships of war at anchor in the port. The scene at this moment was highly picturesque; the sun still glowed in all its glory in the cloudless heavens, the bay itself, blue as the azure sky, was crisped with a slight refreshing breeze. Numbers of Tartar fishermen in their primitive costume, and still more primitive boats, were resting on their oars around the *Iphigenia* corvette, listening in wondering admiration to the fine band playing on its quarter-deck. Sailors were leaning carelessly on their guns, and the officers, clustered in groupes, were waving their caps to welcome us to Yalta.

The little town itself, nestling in a curve of the sea, appeared like a crescent of white buildings, over which rose an amphitheatre of gently swelling hills, upon whose sides hung, in the midst of terraced vineyards, several pretty modern houses, together with a Tartar village. A little further, a dancing stream was seen descending from a

mountain gorge; while, to judge from the multitudes who covered the shore and filled the balconies of the houses, it would appear as if the whole population of Yalta and the surrounding country had assembled to witness our arrival. The variety of costume, the gay uniform of the officers, the gaudy liveries of the servants, and the singular dresses of the Tartars, added not a little to the novelty and animation of the picture.

Perhaps you may think I have dwelt too long on such scenes as these; but, independently of the interest I take in retracing them, I regard them as evidences of the progress of civilisation in this remote and long-neglected country. It was indeed altogether a glorious picture of civilisation, introduced too by the barbarian hordes of the north! and when compared with the degraded state of the Turkish provinces I had just left, a striking exemplification of the difference between the tendency of Mahometanism and Christianity. The one dams up at its source the current of improvement, leaving society and its institutions stationary for centuries; while the other not only purifies the stream of mind, but leaves it free to pass onward, and enlighten each succeeding age with a greater degree of knowledge than its predecessor.

Yalta, quite a little town, with good hotels,

post-office, post for horses, and every convenience for the traveller, is entirely the creation of Count Worrenzow. The houses are well built, the streets prettily laid out, and an air of commercial improvement everywhere visible; and from the security of the harbour, and other commercial advantages, Yalta has every chance of becoming a prosperous town.

On landing, we were met by his excellency the governor-general and the principal nobility of the country; and as horses were provided, we all mounted and rode to Massandra, a country seat belonging to the count, about a league distant; his chateau, then building at Aloupka, not being sufficiently completed for the reception of company.

LETTER XXIII.

VOYAGE TO CIRCASSIA WITH COUNT WORRENZOW—TRAVELLING GUESTS OF HIS EXCELLENCY—AGREEABLE SAILING—THEODOSIA—ILLUMINATIONS—RECEPTION OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL—ANCIENT SPLENDOUR OF THE TOWN—RUINED STATE OF ITS COMMERCE—CAVIARE—CIMMERIAN BOSPHORUS—ARRIVAL AT KERTCH.

THE day had now arrived for the commencement of our intended voyage round the coast of the Black Sea, to which I looked forward with the greatest interest, for none similar had been performed since the days of Roman grandeur; and as this was undertaken in obedience to the express command of the Emperor Nicholas, every possible means were devised to impart eclat, and to assimilate it with that executed under the auspices of the conquerors of the world.

We embarked in the government steam-boat, *Peter the Great*, convoyed by the *Iphigenia* corvette, commanded by Captain Poothatin, and a cutter: these armed vessels were not altogether for useless parade, as, judging by the accounts

received from some officers just arrived from the theatre of war in Circassia, it appeared highly probable that an attack would be made upon us by the warlike tribes of the Caucasus, who were then carrying on a deadly war against the Russians.

Our party consisted of his excellency, Count Worrenzow, whom we may term the autocrat of the expedition; his subjects being the Count de Witt, commander-in-chief of the Russian cavalry, Prince Galitzin, Prince Tchetrerchinski, and other princes, whose names I never could pronounce or write; Mr. Yeames, the consul-general of England, M. St. Sauveur, the consul-general of France, together with aides-de-camp, officers civil and military, doctors, historiographers, artists, and gentlemen without number. Nor were we without the fairer portion of creation: besides the lady of our autocrat, we had Mesdames Nariskin, Potocky, de Choiseul, &c.

Every preparation being completed, and an American, M. Sontag, a rear-admiral in the Russian service, having assumed the command of the expedition, we left Yalta with a fair but light breeze, which soon dropped into a dead calm, obliging the steamer to take the corvette in tow. The commencement of our voyage was the per-

fect ideal of sailing, such as poets may dream of, but is seldom realised in the experience of mortals; for unless a thunder-storm should occur, this part of the Black Sea is seldom agitated by any swell during the summer months, and now it merely changed from a glossy calm to a feathery ripple; while the slight murmur of the foam before the prow of the corvette was not sufficient even to overpower the lighter passages of the music, as it floated occasionally beyond the bulwarks, and was re-echoed by the rocky coast.

In truth, the elements appeared to have made a league in our favour; the motion of the vessel was scarcely perceptible; the temperature of the air was both physically and mentally invigorating; and, instead of the fatigue and privations which too often beset the path of the traveller when on shore, we now glided from bay to bay, from port to port. Agreeable society chased ennui from the mind, and the provident forethought of our kind host prevented the intrusion, not only of a want, but even of a wish.

The same chain of rocks that guard the southern coast continued our companions, but they did not improve on acquaintance; for, with the exception of the country around Alouchta, and that between Yalta and Aloupka, with which I have

already endeavoured to familiarise you, the scenery is not calculated to impress the traveller, who sails along the coast, either with its beauty or fertility.

The first port at which our little fleet came to anchor, was Theodosia; and running in with a fair wind, it was immediately known that we had on board the governor-general; when the flags of every vessel in the harbour streamed in the wind, and a deafening salute of cannon welcomed us from the shore and the ships. On landing, we found the governor of the Crimea, M. Katznachéef, with the principal inhabitants of the town, and the military under arms, ready to receive the count with all the honours due to his high rank.

After the introductory compliments had passed, we were invited to partake of a grand entertainment, prepared at the residence of the governor. All was bustle and animation; the whole population of the town, dressed in their finery, appeared to line the beach and the streets through which we passed. In the evening the town, together with the ships in the harbour, were brilliantly illuminated; and as Theodosia is built at the base, and on the shelving sides of a semi-circular chain of hills, the prospect from the sea, presenting as it now did one blaze of light, was truly magnificent.

I have been purposely somewhat diffuse in my accounts of our ceremonials, as they show, not only the implicit deference paid to rank in this country, but also the high estimation in which this excellent man, Count Worrenzow, is held by the people; for though the attention of the governor and military must be considered official, yet the popular homage was undoubtedly spontaneous, and this was offered with a warmth and unanimity that fully evinced its sincerity.

To judge from the situation, Theodosia, or, as it is now more generally called, Caffa, is well adapted for commerce: the anchorage is good, and that very near the shore; and the bay is sheltered from every wind, except the east and south-east, which I understand rarely blow in these seas with a violence to threaten serious danger to the mariner.

The town is erroneously said to have been erected on the site of the ancient Theodosius, so famous in ancient history. Thus much, however, is certain; that so flourishing was the state of its commerce, when in possession of the Genoese during the middle ages, that it contained a hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants; and, from the splendour of its public buildings, received the appellation of the Constantinople of the Crimea.

The only remains now existing of the grandeur

of its Italian masters, is a watch-tower in tolerable preservation, and the massive ruins of the fortifications; for being captured and plundered by the Turks in 1474, they destroyed the greater part of the town, and the few inhabitants that escaped the general wreck of their once-proud city, fled to other countries; whilst those that remained, sunk into degraded indolence and poverty. It was, however, reserved for the Russians, under the command of Paul Potemkin, brother of Prince Gregory, the celebrated favourite of Catherine II., to complete the work of devastation, so truly and graphically described by Clarke when he visited the Crimea. Indeed, the name of that cruel and avaricious tyrant is still held in the deepest abhorrence, not only by the poor Tartars, but by his own countrymen, the Russians, and who never mention his name but with some epithet of reproach. How necessary, therefore, is it, that men in power should curb their evil propensities, and govern with moderation and justice, in order that their names (nay, even their country and descendants) may not be branded with infamy, and handed down to posterity as a proverb of all that is base and revolting in human nature.

Theodosia is again slowly advancing towards prosperity, under the enlightened rule of its

present governor-general; but, owing to the vicinity of Kertch, which is more advantageously situated for trade, its commerce at present is very trifling, being confined almost wholly to fish, which abound in the neighbouring seas, particularly turbot and sturgeon. The caviare made from the spawn of the latter is much esteemed; and the herrings, anchovies, and oysters, are excellent, and exported in large quantities to the interior of Russia; as the long and frequent fasts imposed by the Greek church occasion a large consumption.

On leaving Theodosia, we bade adieu to everything like beauty on the coast; the rocks, whose foliage had already become very scanty, soon fell into a monotonous steppe, without a tree to relieve the aspect of the dreary waste; and an occasional flock of sheep, with the hut of a Tartar, alone told that man was here a denizen. This desolation is the more extraordinary, as, according to the writings of Strabo, and even of the Genoese in the fifteenth century, we learn that the whole of the district lying between Theodosia on the Euxine and the Sea of Azov, produced such abundance of corn, as to receive the appellation of the granary of the Crimea; thus affording another evidence, either of the deteriorating influence of the Mahometan rule, or that the

climate has entirely changed since that period.

Between the ports of Theodosia and Kertch an accident happened to the English consul, Mr. Yeames, which might have proved fatal. Owing to the total absence of wind, it became necessary that the steamer should be attached to the corvette for the purpose of towing her: the passengers in the former vessel, who crowded the deck at the time, not being apprised that the steamer was about being set in motion, remained unconscious of their danger, when, as might be expected, the mischief-making cable bounded from the deck, and more or less injured several persons in its vicinity, but none so severely as our worthy consul, who was prostrated senseless on the deck, and remained an invalid during the rest of our voyage.

This accident, together with the bursting of a cannon at the firing of a *feu de joie* on our departure from Odessa, and which severely wounded several persons, excited great alarm among the credulous portion of our party, for the Russians, even those of the highest rank, still cling to the belief of the most absurd superstitions; consequently many were the opinions expressed and prognostications that these unlucky omens portended some dire misfortune to the expedition.

After passing the remains of the fortified wall which formed the boundary of the ancient kingdom of the Bosphorus, we doubled Cape Thakli, and entered the Cimmerian Bosphorus, which unites the Black Sea with the Sea of Azov, and forms the boundary between Europe and Asia in this part of the globe.

We were now in the centre of countries connected with some of the most brilliant periods in the history of the Greeks and Romans. These were the countries that formed the emporium of the commerce of Athens, which enriched her citizens, and established her as a great maritime power; and afterwards witnessed some of the greatest triumphs of mighty Rome. Indeed, each side of the strait abounds with objects to interest the traveller in the numerous ruins of its ancient cities, and of the surprising number and size of the sepulchral tumuli everywhere visible.

Favoured by a breeze and the strong current, we soon passed the strait, and cast anchor at Kertch, the ancient Panticapeum, and famous capital of the hero, Mithridates Eutapor. This is the most animated sea-port in the Crimea, and, from its situation, remarkably well adapted for a commercial position. Count Worrenzow, aware of this, has done everything to promote its prosperity; and among other regulations to further

his design, he recently obtained an ukase from St. Petersburg, compelling all vessels bound for the Sea of Azov to stop here and perform quarantine.

This measure alone has been productive of great advantage to the town, still in its infancy. Its present number of inhabitants, which are on the increase, amount to between three and four thousand. The houses are built with some degree of taste, the streets regular, and in planning them the error, so common to the other modern towns I have seen in Russia, has been avoided, of making the streets of such a breadth, that the inhabitants, either from want of inclination or ability, never pave them; consequently the stranger is tormented with clouds of dust in summer, and with mud ankle deep in winter.

The quarantine establishment of Kertch, planned and executed according to the orders of the count, is a perfect model of its kind, with respect to its convenience and arrangements. The situation is airy, the apartments large, the promenades extensive; and it possesses the rare advantage in this parched-up country of being abundantly supplied with the purest spring water. We found in one of the wards a Greek captain, just recovering from the plague; he had been attended during the whole of his ill-

ness by one of his countrymen, who slept in his room without experiencing the slightest inconvenience, and ridiculed the very idea of the plague being contagious.

LETTER XXIV.

KERTCH IN ITS PRESENT STATE—BANQUET—MUSEUM—HILL OF GOLD—OPENING OF A TUMULUS—DISCOVERIES—VIOLATION OF THE TOMB—TUMULI—EXTENSIVE RUINS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF KERTCH—SEAT OF MITHRIDATES—CLIMATE.

INDEPENDENTLY of the interest attached to Kertch as having been the residence of Mithridates, we cannot behold it from the sea without being struck by its pleasing appearance. Like Theodosia, it is surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills, partially covered with houses rising up from its beautiful bay to the heights above: a pretty temple crowns the spot, once adorned by the regal residence of the Bosphorian kings; and another, much more elegant and beautiful in its architecture, a projecting terrace: the latter, intended to be the Museum, is erecting at the expense of the Emperor Nicholas. But the whole of the surrounding country being entirely destitute of foliage, and nearly so of vegetation, we cannot regard it for any length of time, without being annoyed by the bright glare of

the sea and dazzling whiteness of the buildings. Such is the lamentable want of trees in this part of Krim Tartary, that the inhabitants are obliged to resort to a distance of a hundred and twenty wersts in order to obtain fire-wood.

The count was received at Kertch with the same military honours, illuminations, and fire-works, as at Theodosia, and the whole of our party regaled with a splendid banquet, given by the governor of the town, Prince Kherkheoulidzeff. The viands were numerous and good; and I could not help noticing the Crimea lamb, for the peculiar delicacy of its flavour : nor must I forget the wines, also the production of the Crimea, which I thought resembled those of Cyprus. Here I was also introduced, for the first time, to the national drink of Russia,—the far-famed kuass, which I found upon tasting to be sour, weak, watery, and unpalatable; yet, it is extremely popular with every Russian, from the emperor to the peasant. It is made from fermented flour and water ; and when flavoured with fruit, such as apples, plums, crabs, or sour wine, it receives the name of Kieslschice ; in which form, I thought it much more agreeable.

The best description of the Russian kuass was that given by George Tubervill, one of our poets in the reign of Queen Elizabeth : who says,

" Such liquor as they have, and as the country gives,
The one called Kuas, whereby the Russie lives,
Small ware, water-like, but somewhat tart in taste."

After dinner, we visited a public school munificently endowed by the emperor, and remarkably well conducted : we then extended our promenade to the Museum, the collection of which has been considerably augmented since the opening of a tumulus in 1830, called by the Tartars Altyn Obo, or the hill of gold ; pretended to have been the tomb of Mithridates. The immense quantity of bronze gilt vases, gold ornaments, and trinkets then found, fully justified the appellation : they were all of the most exquisite workmanship, but unfortunately a great number of those peculiarly remarkable for their beauty, had been sent to St. Petersburg. This is much to be regretted, as objects of art, which have descended to us in this manner,—relics of ages long since passed away, are certainly far more interesting in the country where they were discovered: for not only does the locality invest them with a peculiar charm, but they are in some measure linked with its history. The remainder have been placed in the Museum, which contains, in addition, a very choice collection of statues, vases, and medals, the whole found in the environs, and unquestionably of Grecian workmanship.

As may be supposed, the acquisition of these treasures generated the desire to open another of the surrounding tumuli ; and in the full expectation that a second discovery of equal importance would be made, the authorities of Kertch selected one, whose dimensions were similar to those of the Altyn Obo, and employed a number of men for several weeks in its excavation. After much labour and useless search, they at length came to an enormous slab ; when guards were stationed around it till the arrival of the count, as it was intended to have been opened in his presence, and by torch-light.

The scene displayed on this occasion was one of great novelty, derived partly from the varied costumes of the company, and partly from the singular character of every surrounding object ; for the tumulus being distant a few leagues from Kertch, the country was so wild, that not a single human habitation was visible, and vegetation had entirely disappeared beneath the scorching rays of the sun ; the height of the thermometer in this part of the Crimea, during the summer months, often exceeding a hundred degrees of Fahrenheit.

You must now suppose our party, amounting to about a hundred, in the dark bosom of an immense tomb ; some below at a depth of thirty feet, others perched on the sides illumined by blazing torches,

whose lurid glare crimsoned the white robes of the women, and lit up the splendid and varied uniforms of the officers; for we had Cossacks of the Don, Tchernemorsky Cossacks, Circassians, Russian sailors, Tartars, Greeks, Karaite Jews, &c.

The work of raising the ponderous slabs, which, singular to say, had been placed over the tomb in the form of a cross, slowly proceeded: expectation was highly wrought; and when after much labour the massive stones were removed, we beheld a square trough of cut stone, with a wooden box in the centre containing a bronze urn, gilt, of the most graceful form and elaborate workmanship.

The whole was carried to Kertch; but when opened, alas! was found to enclose no other treasure than the ashes of him who had been there interred. These remains, perhaps of a prince or hero who had proudly led his followers to victory, I afterwards saw carried out by the servant, and thrown upon the dunghill!

Must we not regard this as an act of wanton sacrilege? Centuries upon centuries have elapsed, these tumuli have been respected by successive hordes of barbarians who overran the country, until it was reserved for the civilised barbarian of the nineteenth century to violate the sacredness of the tomb! It may be said, that this is done

to advance the purposes of science, history, &c. Granted ; but surely it would be more consonant with good feeling to have replaced the ashes from whence they were taken.

It is to be regretted that Christians of every age and in every clime have not been so scrupulous in violating the sanctity of the tomb as might be wished, though at the same time this practice is directly opposed to the divine tenets of our religion. If we only turn to the middle ages, the picture is indeed dark ; and in modern times, although we admit the motive—the advancement of the purposes of science, to be a palliation, yet we must lament the sacrilege. Owing to the rapacity of the western hordes under Baldwin, Earl of Flanders, when in possession of Constantinople, the world has to regret the loss of some of the proudest monuments of immortal Greece. These barbarians not only plundered the tombs of the emperors and private individuals, but sacrilegiously robbed the temples dedicated to their own faith ; and, in their thirst for spoil, melted down every description of metal, from the beautiful golden ornaments of the churches, even to the bronze statues in the streets.

In this respect, the conduct of the Turk, notwithstanding all his faults, deserves our warmest admiration ; for in every country, and in every

war, the disciple of Mahomet has religiously respected the last resting-place of frail mortality.

The tumuli of these countries are exceedingly interesting; the prodigious size and immense numbers we find, both here and in the adjoining island of Taman, incontestibly prove that it was a country once occupied by a great and powerful people. That they were opulent, the variety of gold ornaments, beautiful vases, exquisite statues, and sculptured tombs found in the neighbourhood, sufficiently show. With regard to the origin of the tumuli, if we may depend upon the traditionary accounts of the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants, some few of whom are still to be found in the mountainous districts of the Crimea, they were voluntarily erected by the people; as when one of their great warriors or kings expired, his ashes were placed in the tomb, and every man who admired his virtues carried a portion of earth and threw it over his grave.

Be this as it may, they have certainly not been formed by earth excavated in the vicinity, which is always perfectly level; and some geologists go the length of saying, that the earth of which they are composed is different in its nature from that on which they stand.

However, the idea of a mountain-tomb being

formed as a tribute of the voluntary admiration of an entire people for a chief whose loss they deplored, is beautiful and affecting; and assuredly, if we had such a custom in our own country, it would be at least an incentive to some of our ambitious statesmen and heroes to be more virtuous, as they would then aspire to the distinction of having a pyramid of earth erected over them. The tradition of the Tartars is not, however, without some foundation in truth; for the cairns of the Scots were erected in a similar manner: and in the north of Scotland, an expression of friendship and affection still remains among the people to this effect: "I will cast a stone upon thy cairn."

The resources which the whole of these countries offer to the traveller are varied and interesting; and I much regretted that the short time we remained at Kertch would not permit me to examine, with a greater degree of attention, the interesting ruins of ancient cities in the neighbourhood, a description of which would alone fill a volume.

Besides the remains of the Acropolis, built by Mithridates on a mountain, and which still retains his name, there are, also contiguous to the town, the Cimmerium, Akra and Nymphé of the ancients, together with the ruins of the palace of the

kings of the Bosphorus ; and not far distant from the quarantine establishment, that called Myrmicuim. By extending our promenade only a few leagues further, to the fort of Yeni-kalé, near the sea of Azov, we find some remains of the famous Orthmion, and if we cross the Cimmerian strait to the isle of Taman opposite, there is all that now exists of the once splendid city of Phanagoria, among whose ruins, notwithstanding the well-known propensity of the Russians to destroy antiquities, may still be traced its celebrated Naumachia, a thousand paces in diameter.

In my solitary rambles, I often reposed on a peak of the mountain called the seat of Mithridates, which commands a fine view of the sea and the surrounding country, now a melancholy picture of desolation ; for, with the exception of the little town of Kertch, we behold nothing save ruins and tumuli,—not even a tree, and scarcely sufficient vegetation to support a few stray sheep, who are occasionally seen endeavouring to glean a scanty subsistence from the parched-up earth.

During one of my visits to my favourite haunt, where the heroic monarch was accustomed to sit, meditating the conquest even of mighty Rome herself, I fell into a fit of musing on the instability of human greatness, on the frail tenure by which man holds power, wealth, fame ; but these

most sublime meditations were quickly changed into contemplations on the mutability of human enjoyments; for having forgotten the hour of our departure, I observed our little squadron on the point of leaving the bay of Kertch. A few bounds brought me to the beach, and the sight of a dollar procured me a Tartar boat, which soon took me alongside the corvette.

On account of the great heat of the weather, the governor-general took advantage of the cool breeze of the evening to prosecute our voyage towards the fortress of Anapa, the first Russian settlement in Circassia. The air was serene and refreshing, without the slightest indication of humidity, and the night delightful, illumined as it then was by a moon so bright, that I found no difficulty in reading by its light. Indeed, it was only by substituting her mild radiance for the burning splendour of the sun, that we could enjoy existence; as in this country, such is the intensity of the heat during a month or two in summer, that not only the spirits, but frequently life itself sinks beneath its enervating influence.

However, with the exception of the inconvenience resulting from the burning heat of the sun during a few hours of the day, and which prevented us from going on deck, we had every reason to enjoy our voyage. Fancy, then, the plea-

sure of gliding over the broad expanse of the Euxine without as much as a breeze, or even a swell, that could excite the apprehension of the most timid woman. In addition to this, our occupations and amusements were as diversified and agreeable as if we had been passing our time among the gayest party in the most fashionable saloon : for the studious there was a well-assorted library, card-tables for the idle, music for the admirers of that delightful art; while to the observer, the varied characters of the moving multitude, the distinctive traits by which each individual was marked, supplied a fund of amusement, particularly the sailors, a race proverbially light-hearted and merry. Watching the playful dolphins as they bounded through the waters, afforded another occupation for the indolent; these poetic fishes, which abound in the Euxine, here white and there grey, were our constant companions; they hovered about our vessels, now darting with the swiftness of arrows through the mighty deep, then sailing quietly along in pairs, as if determined to keep pace with us.

INTERVIEW BETWEEN COUNT WORRENZOW AND A CIRCASSIAN CHIEF.

LETTER XXV.

FIRST ASPECT OF THE CAUCASIAN MOUNTAINS—CIRCASSIANS—THEIR HOSTILITY TO RUSSIA—PROCLAMATION OF THE KING OF ENGLAND TO THE CIRCASSIANS—THE PORTFOLIO IN THE MOUNTAINS OF THE CAUCASUS—INTERVIEW BETWEEN COUNT WORRENZOW AND A CIRCASSIAN CHIEF—FORTRESS OF ANAPA—ORIGIN OF THE CONNEXION BETWEEN THE TURKS AND CIRCASSIANS—ANAPA BECOMES A PACHALIK—POLITICAL INTRIGUES—WAR BETWEEN THE TURKS AND RUSSIANS—DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES TO THE CIRCASSIANS FROM THEIR ALLIANCE WITH THE TURKS.

At the dawn of the following day, I was aroused from my cot by the sailors crying "Tcherkesse! Tcherkesse!" Circassia! Circassia! and jumping

upon deck, I caught for the first time a view of the lesser chain of the Caucasus, piled up in all their varied forms to heaven; and a more brilliant pageant than they then exhibited cannot be imagined. The sun, as it slowly emerged from behind a distant peak, gradually gilded every separate pinnacle of the stupendous range; and by its rosy light we discovered the white walls of the fortress of Anapa, bristling with cannon. The decks were soon filled by our party, enjoying the long-wished-for sight; and running into the port with the morning breeze, we were again received with a deafening salute from the shore.

The heights around the fortress of Anapa being in possession of the hostile tribes of the Caucasus, were covered with armed men, who seemed much amazed at the appearance of our little fleet, and probably mistook the sailors and passengers for soldiers, as horsemen were seen galloping in every direction, as if to alarm the inhabitants. In a few minutes, however, they disappeared, leaving none behind, save a few solitary sentinels on the most prominent situations, evidently for the purpose of watching our movements. I found, however, by the aid of a powerful glass, that the dense forests on the shore and the sides of the hills were filled with armed men, no doubt with the intention of giving us a warm

reception, if we extended our visit beyond the walls of the fortress.

Here the governor-general landed, accompanied only by his own compatriots: his reason for this proceeding I am unable to divine, this being the only time he had done so during the whole of our voyage. I subsequently learned, from one of the party, that the garrison was excessively unhealthy, and had recently experienced several disastrous reverses in their conflicts with the natives, who had lately manifested a more determined spirit of hostility; and their attacks being now conducted with greater military skill and discipline, had proved more murderous to their invaders. They were also said to be commanded by an English officer who had served in India. But the last, and to me the most extraordinary piece of intelligence was, that the country was inundated with copies of a proclamation from the king of England, calling upon the Circassians to defend their country; and that in the event of their requiring assistance, he would forthwith despatch a powerful fleet to their aid! Nor was this the only marvel related: for the count himself informed me, that numerous copies of that dreadful publication, the *Portfolio*, were industriously circulated among the people. These two astonishing documents, of course, were immediately translated,

and sent to shake the nerves of the cabinet of St. Petersburg.

My surprise at this intelligence was only equalled by my vexation: I wished myself on shore a thousand times, as I fully expected the pleasure of my tour was terminated, particularly when I observed the cold looks of several Russian friends, who would not separate the individual from his country. Not so, however, Count Worrenzow: he had the good sense and kind feeling to discern at once that this could not be either the secret, or avowed act of the English government, but the wild plan of some exiled Poles who, from the private information he had received, were then among the mountaineers. Indeed, the very idea was absurd in the extreme; for what benefit was likely to accrue from circulating political treatises among a people, who are not only ignorant of every foreign language, but unable to read their own?

When relating the little details of his visit to the fortress of Anapa, the count informed me that he had been honoured with a visit from a Circassian prince, chief of the Natouhay tribe, originally Tartars, who had fled into the mountains of the Caucasus upon the conquest of the provinces on the banks of the Kouban and the sea of Azov.

These people now occupy the left bank of the Kouban, within the Circassian territory, are considered brave even to ferocity, and having carried with them to their adopted country the most bitter animosity against the conquerors of their native land, they are, perhaps, the most uncompromising enemies with which Russia has to contend in these provinces. The purport of the mission of the chief was no less important than to request the assistance of the garrison in a love affair, as he was anxious to carry off the daughter of a neighbouring prince who, it appeared, had been refused him in marriage. This request, however, was regarded merely as a pretence, the real object of his intentions being supposed to be observation ; or, to speak plainly, that he was a spy. And such are the suspicions entertained by this people of the good faith of the Russians, that during the whole time of his conversation with the count, his squire held a loaded pistol in his hand on the cock, ready to be discharged at the head of his excellency, in the event of any violence being offered to his master.

Anapa is situated at the base of a mountain which terminates the lesser chain of the Caucasus, from whence the vast plain of the Kouban extends north and east; the south side of the

town is protected by fortifications erected upon a rock of about a hundred feet high; towards the north the coast is low and marshy, defended by a mole with bastions from an attack by sea, but altogether appearing neglected, and in every respect but ill calculated to resist a serious cannonading.

As a port, the anchorage is not considered very secure; and being shallow, it is only capable of receiving small vessels, which run the risk of being driven out to sea by the violence of the wind, which often descends from the mountains with all the force of a hurricane. The inhabitants, consisting of Circassians, Nogay Tartars, Kalmucks, Komouks, Kabartis, Kazannes, Demikarponis, Daghistanes, Boukhares, with a few Greeks, Armenians, and Russians, speaking a medley of tongues, form a variety seldom met with in so small a population as two thousand. That you may not think me gifted with the faculty of ubiquity, I ought to inform you, that I was indebted for these statistical particulars to the historiographer of our little expedition, who accompanied the count on his visit to the fortress; and to his artist, M. Fazzardi, I owe the vignette, which has been engraved from a sketch he took during the interview between the count and the Circassian prince.

The fortress is not furnished with a sufficient supply of water, that found in the town being brackish and unwholesome; hence the garrison are compelled to fetch this necessary article from a mountain rivulet not far distant, called Boughori. In these expeditions they are obliged to be escorted by a park of artillery with lighted matches, as a defence against the determined hostility of the natives.

Anapa and the surrounding country formerly belonged to a warlike tribe of Circassians, called Skhegake. The last prince, Mehemet Gherei Aslane, who was said to be extremely wealthy, carried on a considerable trade with the Turks and the Tartars of the Crimea, and even possessed several commercial vessels; but after the establishment of the Zaporogztsi Cossacks by Prince Potemkin, on the opposite banks of the Kouban, and who from that time took the name of Tchernemorsky Cossacks, or Cossacks of the Black Sea, a continual predatory war ensued between them and the Skhegake Circassians, in consequence of which that tribe, with the family of its chief, have become nearly extinct. It was from this prince that the Turks obtained permission to establish themselves at Anapa in 1784, for the twofold purpose of protecting their subjects the Nogay and Krim Tartars, who had

taken refuge among the mountaineers on the subjection of their country by Russia, and as a station for commercial purposes.

The fortress was built upon the ruins of one originally constructed by the Genoese, and from this epoch the inhabitants of the Caucasus may date the commencement of the long wars which have desolated their country down to the present day. Anapa now became the seat of a Pacha, Seid Achmet, who by his intrigues not only excited the Circassians to invade the territories of Russia on the left bank of the Kouban, but to rebel against their own chiefs. In this he was influenced partly by jealousy of Russia, with whom the Circassians had already established a commercial intercourse, and partly by a selfish purpose; which so far succeeded, that he won over, by bribes and great promises, two of the neighbouring tribes, the Khapsoukhee and the Kabartee, to revolt and massacre their own chiefs, and become the subjects of the Sultan.

These tribes, however, did not long remain faithful to their engagements; for we subsequently find them, commanded by their own native chiefs, in open arms against the Turks, (whose rule had become odious,) threatening the Pacha and his garrison with utter destruction.

From this time the power of the Pacha extended

no further than the walls of his fortress; and the Ottoman government wisely sought no other advantage than the quiet possession of the fortress, and to establish commercial relations with the natives, which they maintained in the most amicable manner till their final expulsion.

Still, however peaceable might be the disposition of Turkey towards her Circassian allies, yet they were sure to be made parties to every quarrel in which she was engaged; and Anapa was alternately taken and retaken both by Russians and Turks. In 1790 the former, under General Bibikow, crossed the Kouban at the head of 10,000 men, laying waste the country to the gates of Anapa. In the following year General Goudivitch took the town by assault; and in 1807 it was again captured by Admiral Poustochkin and General Govorow, who after pillaging and destroying the unlucky town and fortress, left it desolate.

Still its misfortunes were not yet terminated; for in 1828 our countryman, Admiral Greig, left Sevastopol with a Russian fleet, consisting of eight vessels of the line, four frigates, and twenty corvettes, besides transports, &c.; and in conjunction with Prince Menstchikow, who commanded a large force by land, the town and garrison were subdued, after a murderous siege of nearly three months.

The obstinate resistance made by the Turkish garrison this time, was partly referable to the bravery of their allies, the Circassians, who fought courageously to the last, and were so enraged with the governor, Osman Pacha, for delivering up *their* fortress to a foreign enemy, that they vented their fury by detaining as slaves every Turk who had fled to them for protection. Since this time it has continued in possession of the Russians, and the sword of the invader has never been replaced in its scabbard.

That the possession of Anapa has opened a wide field of enterprise for Russia cannot be doubted, as it offers a tempting opportunity of bringing under her sceptre the various warlike tribes of the Caucasus; still, it appears a difficult undertaking to conquer a people, enthusiastic lovers of liberty, who, entrenched behind their native mountains, have down to the present day bid defiance to the attempts made by the most powerful nations to bring them under subjection. The military operations of Russia have not hitherto been productive of any decided advantage, and the hatred of the people was never more violently excited than at the present moment.

AN EVENING VIEW OF THE BAY OF SOUDJOUK-KALE.

LETTER XXVI.

ARRIVAL AT SOUDJOUK-KALE—ITS CAPTURE BY THE RUSSIANS —ADVANTAGEOUS POSITION—ORIGIN OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TURKS AT SOUDJOUK-KALE—EXPULSION OF THE TURKS—SUPPOSED ANTIQUITY OF SOUDJOUK-KALE—SKETCH OF THE RUSSIAN CAMP—PLANS OF THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT FOR THE FINAL SUBJUGATION OF CIRCASSIA—ARRIVAL OF A CIRCASSIAN NOBLE AT THE CAMP—HIS ADHESION TO THE CAUSE OF RUSSIA—CHARACTER OF THE CIRCASSIANS—WATCH-FIRES.

THE voyage we now made along the shores of this beautiful country, was truly delightful; the breeze from the mountains tempered the great heat, the oak, so long a stranger, once more reared

its majestic head, and the thousand trees and beautiful plants that covered the ground were alike refreshing to the senses and cheering to the spirits of the traveller, just arrived from the sterile rocks, arid wastes, and burning atmosphere of Krim Tartary.

In truth, such was the beauty of the scenery and the variety of the prospects, that we glided almost imperceptibly along till we arrived at Soudjouk-Kalé, a fortress of which the Russians obtained possession, after a sharp contest with the Circassians, only a few days previous to our arrival; and though composed of nothing but a heap of ruins, yet the position is most important, being situated on a splendid bay, affording safe anchorage; while the valley, which is very fertile and of great length, communicates with several others, and thus opens an entrance into the interior of the country, to the very base of the Caucasian Alps.

Soudjouk-Kalé, about thirty miles south-east of Anapa, is in every respect admirably situated, either as a commercial station, a military position to hold the surrounding country in subjection, or as a secure defence against any attack by sea. But in order to ensure the safety of an establishment upon this bay from the attacks of the natives, it will be indispensable, not only to obtain posses-

sion of the heights which command the valley and the entrance to the port, but to fortify them. This, however, cannot be done except at a great expense and fearful sacrifice of life; and even should the Russians succeed in the enterprise, I very much doubt their power either of being able to hold forcible possession, or allowed the necessary time to fortify them, owing to the murderous and harassing warfare continually carried on by the natives.

Some few years after the Turks had established themselves at Anapa, they obtained permission from another Circassian prince, called Gherei-Kochmit, son of Chagan-Gherei, to form a similar establishment at this place; consequently they erected a commercial depôt, which they afterwards fortified and manned with a garrison, giving it the name of Soudjouk-Kalé (fortress of Soudjouk). But on looking over the Turkish records, I find that they adopted a different line of policy from that pursued at Anapa, contenting themselves with merely maintaining a friendly correspondence with the natives, and in converting them to the creed of Islamism.

The Soudjouk commercial depôt, however, turned out equally fatal to the peace of the natives as that at Anapa; for we find it subsequently taken from the Turks by the Russian General

Goudovitch; and later in 1811 by the Duc de Richelieu, governor of Odessa; and again reverting to the Turks by the peace of Bucharest. But the total want of warlike spirit exhibited by the Turks, and the frequent introduction of the plague, which swept thousands of the Circassians to their graves, so disgusted this brave people, that in 1820 they finally banished their Mahometan allies from this part of the coast, razed the fortifications to the ground, and Soudjouk-Kalé remained a heap of ruins till the present day. It is supposed by some writers to have been the site of the ancient Sindika, or Sidone, while others assign this honour to Anapa; the name of Soudjouk, however, bears the nearest analogy to the original one, Sindika. An additional evidence is afforded in favour of the former, by the circumstance that Arrian, the geographer, asserts Sindika to have been situated at a distance of five hundred stades from Panticapeum, now Kertch; and as that town is about fifty miles from the bay of Soudjouk-Kalé, the measurements nearly agree, at the rate of computing eleven marine stades to a mile.

From the accounts we received from the Russian officers, it would appear that the taking of Soudjouk-Kalé was attended with a great loss of life, the Circassians having fought with the bra-

very of desperation. But how was it possible that these mountaineers, with no other weapons than rifle, sword, bows, and arrows, nor other bulwark than their own breasts, could resist, with any prospect of success, the attack of a well-disciplined army of 15,000 men, led on by an experienced general, M. Willemineff, assisted by a regular train of artillery and every other materiel of war ?

The shades of evening were fast deepening into the gloom of night as we arrived at the camp of Soudjouk-Kalé, which then displayed a scene that will ever live in my recollection. The villages of the unhappy mountaineers still blazing on the sides of the hills, together with the numerous watch-fires of the soldiers in various parts of the camp, shed their lurid glare, not only over the moving multitude, but the whole surrounding country to the highest peaks of the towering mountains, mimicking the bright blaze of the noon-day luminary of heaven.

Nor was the view on the boundless expanse of the Euxine at that moment less striking: the full red moon, as it slowly emerged from the bosom of the mighty deep, flung its tranquil light over the crimsoned waves of the sea, forming a pure and peaceful contrast to the warlike din on shore, which exhibited a picture at once novel and ani-

mated. The graceful form of the snow-white tents, and the almost endless variety of the military costume, formed the principal features,—a variety peculiar to the Russian empire, composed as it is of so many different nations and tribes.

Besides the regular Russian troops, there were the Tchernemorsky Cossacks, and those of the Don, mounted on their fleet steeds, and brandishing their long lances in the air; and as the governor-general had been expected, the whole of the military were habited in full uniform. The costume of the Ataman, and the officers belonging to the Tchernemorsky corps, could not be exceeded in splendour, being more oriental than European. Their horses glittered with embroidered housings, and their arms with embossed gold and turquoises; while the cap of Astrakan, and the well-fitting jacket or polonaise of scarlet cloth richly braided with gold and ornamented with the Circassian patron pocket, imparted a tout ensemble to the figure at once warlike and magnificent.

In addition to these, the number of fine young men, officers belonging to the life guards of the emperor, (who had volunteered to serve in the Caucasus during the summer's campaign,) glittering with jewelled orders, contributed not a little in giving variety to the picture, which was indeed most characteristic.

The bands of the various regiments were performing their most lively airs; aides-de-camp galloping to and fro; here a group of soldiers playing at cards on the head of a drum, there creating thirst by swallowing copious draughts of the beloved vodka; in one place chaunting with a loud roar their national airs, and in another tripping the wild dance, the barina, to strains equally wild.

So far all told of peace; but there were other signs and sounds which proclaimed that war was not far distant. Such as the loud clang of the anvil, the sharpening of sabres, striking of flints, cleaning of guns, mingled with the loud strokes of the carpenter's axe employed in erecting palisades. Nor were the number of sturdy fellows hastily throwing up intrenchments, and camels groaning beneath the weight of field-pieces and ammunition-wagons, less indicative of the approaching struggle. In the midst of these hostile preparations, some few were to be seen quietly smoking at the door of their tents; others squatted round large fires—cooking perhaps their last meal, for the avant-guard had just been driven in, bringing the intelligence that the enemy were advancing in great numbers, and from the positions they had taken, no doubt meditated a serious attack.

As we wandered through the immense multitude, not a few spoke eloquently, by their pale emaciated countenances, bandaged limbs, and attenuated frames, that their recent victory had been indeed dearly bought. These poor invalids Count Worrenzow never passed without addressing some few words of consolation and encouragement; and his first care was to visit those tents appropriated exclusively to the sick and wounded, where he distributed money, food, cordials—all that could be necessary for their wants, and soothed the spirits of the pain-worn men with sympathy, and approbation for their bravery.

After taking some slight refreshment, and smoking a tchibouque in the tent of the general, our visit to the camp was concluded with a mimic combat for the amusement of the ladies, between the Cossacks of the Don, and the Tchernemorsky Cossacks of the Kouban: the latter personated the Circassians.

During the time I remained on shore, I had for my companions several young officers of the guards, who communicated to me a variety of interesting particulars respecting the Circassians and their mode of warfare, together with the plans proposed to be carried into execution for the purpose of reducing them to subjection.

Among other things, it is the intention of the

Russian government to occupy every port, bay, and landing-place on the coast of Circassia; and to build forts in the most eligible situations, which are to be connected with each other by means of military roads, intended to be conducted along the heights. Undoubtedly, if this plan can be accomplished, the mountaineers will be prevented from having any intercourse with their neighbours the Turks, who are known to aid them with their counsels, and supply them with ammunition; and as they are entirely destitute of salt, powder, and every species of manufacture, this scheme, it is presumed, will have the effect of sowing dissension among the chiefs, breaking the unconquerable spirit of the people, and of eventually reducing them to submission.

This is the more practicable, as Russia is already master of the right bank of the Kouban, the provinces of Mingrelia, Immeretia, and Gourial; together with those countries lying between the Caspian sea, and the Alps of the Caucasus.

For this object, Russia has been labouring during the last half century; for this, the effeminate inhabitants of province after province have been subdued, till nothing now remains to complete the circle, except the Circassian coast on the Black Sea; to effect which I have no doubt all the energies and resources of this vast empire

will be directed. Still, so conscious are the Russians of the difficulty of the undertaking, that the commander in chief, General Willemineff, assured me he considered the conquest of the Ottoman empire would be a work of more facility than the subjugation of the warlike tribes of the Caucasus.

My young friends also pointed out to my notice several Poles of noble families, who, either having been taken prisoners during the late insurrection, or exiled for their political opinions, were sent here to serve as private soldiers; the Caucasus being considered in Russia as a second Siberia, or rather, perhaps, a school in which refractory subjects are taught the lesson of obedience.

One of these political delinquents, M——, was introduced to me, when dining a few weeks previous with the governor of Kertch. He had been an author of great celebrity, and considered one of the most learned men in the empire; but having unfortunately taken a prominent part in the well-known revolutionary movement at St. Petersburg, the punishment of his crime was mitigated, in consideration of his literary talents, to military banishment to the Caucasus, where he served twelve years as a private soldier: and such was his bravery and good conduct, that, upon representations being made to the Russian government

in his favour, he was pardoned, and presented with a pair of epaulettes. However, pardon and honours have come too late, as the poor fellow is dying of a consumption.

Perhaps the greatest novelty of the camp at Soudjouk-Kalé, was a native Circassian, a Pchikhan, or noble, who had recently joined the Russian standard. The fairer portion of our party thought proper to confer upon him the name of Jupiter; but I should be inclined to call him an Antinous. His head and features, truly Grecian, were strikingly handsome; while the luxuriant beard, dark mustachios, and turbaned cap of the finest black Astrakan, imparted an expression of manly beauty and character; and, in truth, his figure for athletic grace of mould might well have served as a model for the immortal Phidias. Not having yet assumed the Russian uniform, his costume was perfectly national, consisting of a tunic and full trowsers of fine cloth, gathered at the knee, the colour of the falling leaf, which these mountaineers adopt as being best calculated to conceal them in their guerilla warfare. Indeed, I was not a little surprised to observe the neat manner in which the dress of the young chief was made, and it gave me quite a distaste for our cherished European modes; as assuredly the open collar displaying the fine contour of his neck, and

the close-binding girdle that secured his symmetrical form, seemed to me all that nature and art could devise for exhibiting the figure to the best advantage.

The young traitor was, however, under strict surveillance, it being strongly suspected he was a spy; for it is no uncommon freak of the Circassian chiefs and nobles to offer their services to the emperor, receive handsome presents in arms and money, and then scamper off, on the first opportunity, to their own people, after having acquired such information as might suit their purpose. Several instances of this were related to me, some of which had occurred only a short time previous; but none more strongly marked with ingratitude than that of Mamet-Indargou, chief of the Chipakoua tribe in the vicinity of the bay of Pchad, who after receiving for many years the pay and presents of the Russian government, is now in open hostility against it, while his sons are among the fiercest and most determined enemies against Russian rule in Circassia.

In short, the description we received from the officers at the camp respecting the character of the Circassians, would have been sufficient to damp the ardour of any traveller, however courageous and enterprising he might be, from visit-

ing a people in so savage a state. Among other vices, they were represented to be all robbers by profession, so ferocious that no kindness could tame, so treacherous that no treaties could bind, continually engaged in petty warfare even with each other, notorious for duplicity and breach of faith, and so utterly destitute of truth, that they will not hesitate to slay with one hand, while the other is extended in friendship.

These accounts were by no means calculated to inspire me with encouraging anticipations as to my projected tour in the interior of the Caucasus; and certainly did not correspond with the details I received from my friend the Chevalier Taitbout de Marigny, consul of his majesty the King of Holland at Odessa, who visited the coast of Circassia in 1823 and 1824. Though so many years have since passed, he recalled, with pleasure, the kind reception he then received; nor was he ever weary of praising the character of that unsophisticated people for hospitality, good faith,—in short, for all the virtues that could adorn our species in a half-civilised state; and he often declared to me, that had it not been for friends, family, and home, he would have taken up his residence among them.

However, if we place ourselves in the position of the Circassians, and consider with what feel-

ings they must regard their powerful neighbours, who endeavour, by the sword and every art of political intrigue and corruption, to betray and enslave them, we cannot feel surprised at any conduct however atrocious, that people may evince towards a nation whom they must ever consider as most unprincipled invaders.

Highly delighted with our visit to the camp, and grateful for the entertainments and amusements the officers had so kindly prepared for us, we returned at a late hour to our vessels, and passed the night at anchor in the bay, it not being deemed prudent to proceed on our voyage along a coast occupied by so active an enemy. Our attention was more than once directed to numerous watch-fires blazing on the hills, which appeared to correspond with each other like telegraphs, evidently intended to give warning of approaching danger.

LETTER XXVII.

VOYAGE TO GHELENDJIK—SPLENDID COAST SCENERY—ARRIVAL AT GHELENDJIK—ADVANTAGES OF THE BAY AS A HARBOUR—FAILURE OF THE RUSSIAN COLONY—FORTRESS—SALUBRITY OF THE CLIMATE—BAY OF PCHAD—HOSTILE ATTITUDE OF THE NATIVES—FERTILE ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY—BAY OF DJOOK—BOUNDARY BETWEEN UPPER AND LOWER ABASIA—CHARACTER OF THE ABASIANS—DEFILE OF JAGRA—VISIT TO THE FORTRESS—INCESSANT WARFARE OF THE NATIVES—UNHEALTHINESS OF THE SITUATION.

THE next morning the sun rose with an Asiatic splendour, such as we might expect in the land where mornings were first created; and as our little fleet, with their clouds of canvas just fanned by a gentle breeze, proudly wound its way in a majestic curve out of the lovely bay, we beheld the military rushing in thousands to the shore to bid us adieu; and at the same moment a loud martial burst of wind-instruments floated along the waves, whose sweet notes now lost, then heard, were finally overpowered as they mingled with the deafening roar of successive discharges of artillery; the whole forming a scene highly

picturesque and animated. But it was not till we had doubled Cape Taouba, and entered the pure transparent waters of the vast basin of the Euxine, that I enjoyed in perfection what was most congenial to my feelings,—the superb prospect of this Eden-like country, which I am inclined to think, for beautiful coast-scenery, has no parallel upon this planet of ours.

I admired the shore, from Anapa to Soudjouk-Kalé, for its picturesque character; but the sublime panorama now unfolded, surpassed every expectation, however sanguine, I had hitherto formed. It was in truth a fairy-land, as if created for the purpose of exhibiting the loveliest combinations which unadorned nature alone could form.

The mountains were covered with verdure from the water's edge to the highest peak, and whether the eye wandered along the shore, up the bosomy hills, or through the fertile valleys, numerous flocks of snow-white sheep were seen quietly grazing, mingled with herds of buffaloes, superb oxen, and jet-black goats, with their long, slender limbs. Nor must we forget the numbers of beautiful half-wild horses, proudly tossing their curved necks and flowing manes while bounding like deer through the valleys and along the steep sides of the hills.

As our vessels glided slowly forward, we dis-

tinctly saw the little cots of the Circassians, with their smoking chimneys and farm-yards surrounded by groves of fruit-trees, appearing as if the very abodes of contentment and peace; shepherds in their picturesque costume, with long spears in their hands, tended their flocks and herds; the agricultural fields were filled with men, women, and children, cutting down the waving corn; and camels and buffaloes, loaded with the produce, were slowly winding their homeward way through the deep valleys. It was indeed a lovely picture, which blended the most sublime and picturesque scenery with the beauty of romantic rural life, and realised all that the most lively invention of a poet could create of an Arcadia.

My eyes were never tired of resting on this vision of loveliness: and I dwelt on it with feelings of painful regret, as a picture I never was to behold again, aware as I was of the fate to which this interesting people are destined, the formidable power against which they have to contend, and the judicious plans laid down to deprive them of their country and independence. I thought of the young Kabardian I had known at Constantinople, of the animated descriptions of his country, his romantic attachment for it, his disregard of wealth and luxury, his contempt for the dress, customs, manners, and habits of

the effeminate Turks. "Give me," said he, "but my country free and independent; my cot, my friends, my horses, and my arms, and I would not exchange my condition with the great Padishah of all the Osmanlis." It is proverbial that mountaineers, even in the most inhospitable regions, are enthusiastic lovers of their country; but surely any man possessed of the slightest spark of courage, who calls this beautiful land his home, would die to defend it, from being desecrated by the unhallowed footsteps of a foreign tyrant.

Ghelendjik, the next military possession of Russia on the coast of Circassia, being only about sixteen miles distant from Soudjouk-Kalé, we soon came to anchor. This fine bay, called by the Circassians Koutloutzi, and by the Turks Jalandji-Ghelendjik, is considered one of the safest and most commodious harbours in the Black Sea. I cannot compare its form to any other object more appropriate than an oyster-shell; being at the entrance about three quarters of a mile from cape to cape, two miles and a half in length, and at its greatest breadth one mile and a quarter. In the whole of this space there is capital anchorage, varying in depth from fourteen fathoms to four very near the shore, the shallowest part being that near a small river on the right bank

of the bay; and as the harbour is protected against every wind by the surrounding highlands, the mariner has nothing to fear, except when the north-east wind descends from the mountains.

The bay opens into a beautiful valley, called Mezip, about a league in length, watered by a small fertilising river, commanded by a range of hills, and communicating with several others, one of which leads to within a few leagues of Soudjouk-Kalé, and another on the other side to the bay of Pchad.

The Russians, fully sensible of the importance of the bay of Ghelendjik as a commercial and military position, took an early opportunity of appropriating it to themselves; for we find, shortly after the taking of Anapa by that power, and the extinction of the commercial alliance between the Circassians and the Turks, that the emperor issued an ukase, dated St. Petersburg, April 5, 1832, according permission to all Russian subjects to form a settlement on the bay of Ghelendjik, and at the same time granting immunity from all taxes and imposts, together with exemption from military duty, for the space of twenty-five years.

This permission was, however, given on condition of defending themselves against the natives; but the settlement having been found, on trial,

untenable, on account of the continued hostility of the mountaineers, it was soon abandoned, and now merely consists of a fort, formed of intrenchments and palisadoes, mounted with heavy guns, and manned by a garrison of about two thousand men; who, as in the other fortresses, dare not venture from their fastness, the whole of the heights and passes being still in possession of the natives.

The dwellings of the soldiers are a miserable assemblage of little cabins, built of wood. However, the men appeared more vigorous and healthy than in any other of the garrisons we had visited; this was fully evidenced by the hospital, which contained no more than between sixty and seventy patients. I should therefore be inclined to think, that Ghelendjik is a salubrious situation, probably the result of the absence of marshes, and the increased breadth of the valley.

Here we found stationed a Russian corvette, a brig of war, and two or three cutters, which, together with the guns of the fort, saluted us on our entrance into the bay. This, added to the thunder from our own vessels, had a superb effect; more especially as the neighbouring mountains echoed and re-echoed the hoarse roar, till the pealing thunder gradually fell fainter on the ear, and at length died away in silence.

But whatever amusement these warlike sounds

might have afforded our delightful party, how different must have been the feelings of the unhappy Circassians, when the horrid crash was repeated by the rocks, and resounded through their once peaceful valleys. At that moment, no doubt many a hardy mountaineer girded his sword, and many a timid mother, with streaming eyes, pressed her baby closer to her bosom, and flew to the mountain top. O ambition! how many crimes hast thou not caused! how many miseries inflicted upon the human race!.

About fourteen or fifteen miles further, we passed the bay of Pchad, still in possession of the Circassians. Here we saw several small vessels lying at some distance up the river, carefully covered with willows, and shaded by the dense foliage on the banks. This was done for the twofold purpose of preserving them from the rays of the sun, and the observation of the Russians; as a few weeks previous the captain of our corvette paid them a visit, when he burned nearly the whole of the vessels in the bay.

The inhabitants were evidently expecting a repetition of hostilities; for, by the aid of a powerful glass, I observed them assembled in great numbers, and all well armed. Among the groupes were several turbaned heads of the Turks: I also clearly saw, that the dense forests which

lined the shore were filled with men equipped with every description of offensive weapon, from a rifle, and bows and arrows, down to a javelin; and not unfrequently, a gallant chieftain galloped forth on horseback in glittering armour, attended by his squire, and, mounting the summit of a small hill, drew his sword and waved it in the air, as if defying us to combat. Indeed, we fully expected an attack, as we had been already repeatedly fired upon; and, in anticipation of such an event, we were amply prepared with the means of defence. But I have no such exciting incident to record, the only disadvantage it entailed being, that we were obliged to steer our course at a greater distance from the shore.

Between Pchad and the bay of Djook (or Kodos) I observed more decisive evidences of civilisation than any I had previously witnessed. Every spot appeared diligently cultivated; the sides of the hills were laid out in pretty fields, enclosed with paling, in which numerous flocks and herds were feeding, together with several horses, evidently of the finest breed. The cottages, also, appeared better built, with neat verandahs in front; and the verdant pastures and meadows, intermingled with the golden corn, and the dark shades of the groves and clumps of forest trees, formed a picture which excited the most lively admiration of our whole party.

We must presume, that the population and the industrious habits of the people of Circassia have been considerably underrated; for, if we take into account the vast territory they occupy, and the number of hands required merely to cultivate one of these immense mountains, frequently rising to a height of five thousand feet, and, unlike those of every other country I have visited, fertile to the summit, this people must be not only very numerous, but indefatigable agriculturists.

The scenery we now passed was equally lovely with that I have attempted to describe, and only wanted the turreted castle, ivied monastery, and picturesque village of Europe, with its neat church and pointed spire, to be the most charming country in the world. But the traveller who is already familiar with European landscapes, will here find objects and scenes which from their novelty must create both surprise and interest. And, thank Heaven! war and desolation do not affect the climate; for the atmosphere is so balmy, the air so light and bracing in the vicinity of the mountains, as to exceed even that of the finest part of Italy. The very mists that hover so darkly round our northern mountains, are here so light and filmy, that instead of obscuring the distant objects, they shed a still richer tint of beauty over the whole landscape. Gigantic oak,

beech, and the wide-spreading valona, crown the summits of dizzy heights, which in less favoured climes would have exhibited the dark, cold, crippled pine; while the sides of the lofty hills, down to the rippling stream beneath, bloom with every tree, fruit, and flower, in all their rich luxuriance.

Then for the animated features of the landscape, we had bands of Circassians, headed by their chief in bright armour, flying through the woods; camels, loaded with women and children, slowly pacing along the beach, varied by the appearance of some noble dame, covered with her white veil and mounted on her Arab steed, and attended by her women. And, to give a still further variety, these were a people different from every other, a people who have maintained their independence, while the most powerful nations upon earth fell in succession beneath the sway of the barbarian, or the rule of the proud conqueror of civilised life; a people living in all the primitive simplicity of the ancient patriarchs, still retaining their own laws, customs, and manners from time immemorial; a race the most beautiful upon the face of the globe, and who have never been contaminated by a mixture with the blood of foreigners.

About twenty miles distant from Pchad, we

perceived the little bay of Djook, occasionally visited by Turkish trading-vessels, several of which were lying in the harbour. It presents the form of a semicircle, and might measure three quarters of a mile in diameter, offers tolerable good anchorage, and is still in possession of the natives; and, from the number of cottages, and the well-cultivated fields in the neighbourhood, we concluded the population to be considerable. The valley of Djook is considered to form the boundary between the provinces of Upper and Lower Abasia.

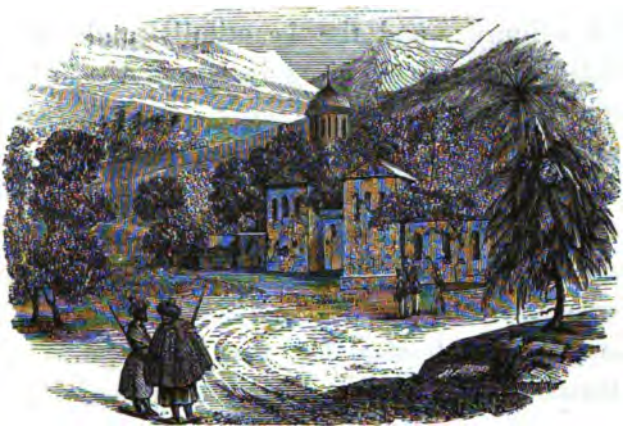
A little further are also several other bays and sinuosities with small rivers. The most important are those called Mamai and Ardtler; the latter is so inconsiderable, as scarcely to deserve the name of a harbour; but, being protected by a cape from the fury of the north wind, which in this part of the Black Sea often blows with great violence, it is most frequently visited, particularly by the Turks, the only strangers who attempt trading with the Circassia-Abasians; a people said to be more piratical, ferocious, and suspicious of foreigners, than any other among the confederate tribes of Circassia. This suspicion has been considerably augmented since the attempt of Russia to subdue them: hence

every stranger is now regarded as a Russian spy, and certain of being shot or condemned to slavery, unless protected by one of their chiefs.

We next cast anchor at the bay of Vadran, distant twenty miles from Djook. Here commences the famous defile called Jagra, at the entrance of which the Russians have a settlement, consisting of a few houses, and the ruins of a church and a monastery. The latter has been converted into barracks; but the Circassians having possession of the upper part of the defile, and the mountains which command the fort, the military are momentarily exposed to their attacks, and almost certain of being shot if they move out of their quarters, and not unfrequently this has been the case in the courtyard of their barracks.

The first care of the count was to visit the hospital, which unfortunately was filled with the sick and dying soldiers. The medical attendants informed me, with much gravity, that the malady then raging with such fatal results at Vadran, was the yellow fever, so prevalent in some parts of America and the West Indies. Although I do not pretend to be acquainted with the science of medicine, yet experience and observation having in some degree instructed me, I felt quite assured, with all due deference to the learned disciples of Galen, that they were in error; and

that the disorder was in reality the bilious remittent fever, as the invalids exhibited all the symptoms which usually characterise that fatal disorder in the east. For instance, great irritability of the stomach, yellowness of the eyes, a vomiting of dark-coloured bile, intense headache, a pain and fulness about the left side, and generally diarrhœa. At all events, the disease appeared to have made most fearful ravages on the health of the garrison; for the whole, not even excepting the officers, wore an aspect so bloated and cadaverous, that, instead of being equal to the performance of military duties, they seemed scarcely able to drag on a miserable existence.



GREEK CHURCH BUILT BY JUSTINIAN AT PITZOUNDA.

LETTER XXVIII.

INCREASED ALTITUDE OF THE MOUNTAINS—PITZOUNDA—EXCURSION TO THE FORTRESS—SUPERB FORESTS—CONTRAST BETWEEN THE CIRCASSIANS AND THE RUSSIANS—GREEK CHURCH AND MONASTERY—EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIAN FEELING STILL EXISTING AMONG THE NATIVES—TRADITION CONNECTED WITH THE CHURCH—ANTIQUITY OF PITZOUNDA.

Between Vadran and Pitzounda the mountains rose to a very considerable altitude; some were even crowned with snow, while forests of gigantic trees covered their sides down to the water's edge: the country also became more savage in its aspect, more thinly populated, wild,

and solitary; and the beautifully undulating fields I so much admired in Lower Abasia had totally disappeared.

This was the longest voyage we had made without stopping, being eighty miles; consequently we experienced no little satisfaction on entering the vast bay of Pitzounda, a bay not more celebrated for its excellent anchorage and the great depth of water, than for its protected situation, being sheltered against the land winds by a chain of mountains, and from those of the sea by an elevated promontory, leaving it only exposed to the south-east, which, I understand, from the accounts of our Russian navigators to be by no means dangerous in this part of the Black Sea.

The fortress is about two miles distant from the coast; to which our way led through a forest of splendid trees, partially thinned since the occupation of the fort by the Russians. The oak, the beech, and the chesnut were among the finest of their species: the cherry-trees exceeded in size any that I had ever seen before, and appeared indigenous to the soil. The wild olive, the fig, the pomegranate in full bloom, and vines of enormous growth wreathed from tree to tree, breathed luxuriance, and a thousand rare plants and flowers the most refreshing fragrance.

The weather still continued delightful; and towards the close of evening, as we promenaded through a fertile plain at the foot of the snow-crowned Alps of the Caucasus, the glowing sun shooting its slanting beams through the branches of the trees, we thoroughly enjoyed our little expedition; and as we glided through the mighty giants of the forest, the officers in their brilliant uniforms, and the ladies in their muslin robes, formed a striking contrast with the wild contour of the inhabitants, who, armed with musket, sword, and poniard, flocked in numbers to gaze at us.

We were now in the country of the Circassians of Upper Abasia, whose costume differed in some trifling degree from that of the Circassian noble I described while at Soudjouk-Kalé. The colour of their dress was either dark green or the autumnal brown, and I thought the cap and mantle most convenient articles of dress; the former, of a whitish colour, is made from goat's hair in a conical shape with two long ears, which, hanging over their shoulders, serve as a protection against rain, and in fine weather form a turban: a similar head-dress is worn by the Greeks in the Archipelago. The mantle, also made from a mixture of goats' and camels' hair, is perfectly impenetrable to the rain.

This being the first time I had penetrated so far into the interior of a country rarely pressed by the foot of any European traveller, so imperfectly known, and so little noticed either in ancient or modern history, my curiosity was much excited, and I regarded every object with the deepest interest. It was also the first time that I had seen the Circassians mingling on friendly terms with the Russian soldiers; and assuredly a more striking contrast than the two people presented, both in physical appearance and moral expression, it is impossible to conceive.

The one, with symmetrical forms and classic features, seemed breathing statues of immortal Greece; the other, coarse-looking, short, and thick-limbed, appeared like an inferior race of beings. But if the physical line of demarcation was broad, the moral was still broader. The mountaineer, free as the eagle on the wing, stepped and moved, as if proudly conscious of his independence, with a dauntless self-confidence not unmixed with scorn, that none but a child of liberty could exhibit in his bearing; and which reminded me of the majestic Albanian, or Scott's Highland chieftain, when he exclaimed,

> My foot's upon my native heath,
> And my name's Mac Gregor."

The mass of the Russians displayed the air and

manner of men always accustomed to be commanded, and to pay the most implicit deference to the will of their superiors in rank; but as we have none such in England, I am at a loss for a comparison that will afford you an idea of this sort of bearing in men.

The chief of the tribe inhabiting this part of the country, who resided some few leagues distant, is said to be friendly to the Russian government; but, much to the annoyance of our party, he did not make his appearance, although it was confidently anticipated that we should have had the pleasure of seeing him.

The fortress is situated in the interior of a ruined monastery; to which is attached a church built in the form of the Greek cross, and in admirable preservation, when we consider that it was erected by the Emperor Justinian.

On the extinction of the Byzantine empire by the Turks, it appears that these fanatics, on taking possession of Pitzounda, destroyed the convent; but whether through the pious intercession of the inhabitants, or from fear of irritating the people, the church was spared, and now remains one of the most interesting architectural monuments in these countries. The vignette appended to this letter is an exact representation.

Centuries having elapsed since it was used as a temple of christian worship, it has unfortunately become considerably dilapidated; but as the manuscripts, ornaments, and furniture have been religiously preserved by the natives, I understand the Emperor Nicholas has given orders that it should be put in complete repair; and although the majority of the people have embraced the creed of Mahomet, they still regard the christian edifice with the deepest veneration. This feeling is carried to such an extreme, (founded no doubt upon ancient usage,) that even the greatest malefactor in the adjoining countries finds within its walls an inviolable sanctuary from the pursuit of justice.

One of the officers of the garrison related a tradition, which still further attests the belief of the inhabitants in the sacred character of the building. "Shortly after the subjection of Pitzounda to the Ottoman rule, a Turk entered the church and stole some articles of value: the natives reproached him with the profanation, but they received no other answer than scorn for their credulity, and laughter for their superstition. The vengeance of Heaven, however, according to the Circassians, was not slow to overtake the infidel; for as he was stepping into the boat with his sacrilegious plunder, the angel

of death sent fire from on high and destroyed him, but the sacred relics were left unscathed by the lightning's blaze!"

The learned and well informed of our party concurred in the opinion that Pitzounda must have been the site of the ancient Pythus, usually called the Grand Pythus; and also that it formed the frontier of the Byzantine empire on this side of Asia. It is also said, that the inhabitants are more assimilated to European usages in their manners, less ferocious in their dispositions, and less tenacious of their independence, than any other of the tribes of the Caucasus.

The distance between Pitzounda and Souchom-Kalé is computed to be about thirty miles. In consequence of the great heat of the weather, we performed this voyage by night: consequently my descriptive powers must lie in abeyance, which probably you will not very much regret. However, from the faint outline I was able to perceive, the scenery continued to become of a still more alpine character, and we arrived at our destination about four o'clock in the morning.

VIEW OF THE BAY OF SOUCHOM-KALE.

LETTER XXIX.

DESTRUCTION OF SOUCHOM-KALE BY THE RUSSIANS—DANGERS TO THE GARRISON FROM THE CLIMATE AND THE ENMITY OF THE NATIVES—VOYAGE TO REDOUT-KALE—ISKURIA AND ANAKRIA—PROVINCE OF MINGRELIA—CHANGED ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY—INTERMINABLE FORESTS—A STORM—DANGER OF PASSING THE BAR—KHOPI—EXCURSION UP THE RIVER—LANDING AT REDOUT-KALE—DESOLATE ASPECT OF THE TOWN.

Souchom-Kale, like Pitzounda, is interesting for its historical reminiscences, most antiquarians agreeing that it is built upon, or near the site of, the famous Dioscurias, which also bore the name of Sevastopol. This opinion receives additional confirmation from the remains of the forti-

fications and other ruins in the neighbourhood. It is now, however, a miserable place, and one of the most injurious to the health of the Russian soldiers of any station we had previously visited.

From the accounts of the Turks, we learn that Souchom-Kalé, when in their possession, was a very considerable town, with a population of three thousand ; whereas at present it has decreased to little more than a dozen wretched huts, inhabited by a few Greeks and Armenians. The reason assigned by rumour for this extraordinary decline in prosperity and decrease of population is, that it was destroyed some years since by the Russians, in revenge for the treachery of the inhabitants, who it was said were in the practice of betraying the soldiers of the garrison into the power of their enemies the mountaineers, when they were carried to a distant part of Circassia and sold to the Turks and Persians as slaves.

The fortress, built in the form of a square, bears a Turkish inscription over the entrance. It was in a most dilapidated state, but, as usual, bristling with cannon; and, like all the others I had seen in Circassia, not intended to repel an invasion by sea so much as an attack by land, which was evidently the danger principally apprehended, as guards were stationed in the vicinity with the same care as if the enemy had been at the gates.

So perilous, however, is the service, that the sentinels retire at the close of evening within the walls for protection, when the dogs are turned out, who are so well trained that they never fail to give notice of approaching danger. Indeed, so intense is the animosity of the Circassians in this district, that no safety exists for the Russian soldier beyond the walls. If he goes forth to procure wood and water, he is obliged to be accompanied by a guard and field-pieces, in the same manner as at the fortresses I have already mentioned; and notwithstanding all this precaution, they are every day falling victims to the bullets of an enemy the most insidious and indefatigable.

Still, I understood from the officers at Souchom-Kalé, that they were on more friendly terms with the neighbouring Circassian tribes of Upper Abasia, who frequently come down from their mountains, effect some trifling barter with the Armenian merchants, and peaceably return; the great danger to be apprehended being from the hostility of the inhabitants of Lower Abasia. Here we also perceived the very extensive ruins of a monastery and church, evidently, from its architecture, of very ancient date.

On leaving Souchom-Kalé, we passed close to the unimportant bays of Iscuria, distant twelve miles; Anakria, thirty-two; together with the

ruins of the ancient Kellassour. Anakria, said to have been built on the site of the once splendid city Heraclea, in the kingdom of Pontus, is the most interesting settlement on this part of the coast, whether we consider it with reference to its ancient or modern history. It is situated at the confluence of the Ingour and Agis; and even so late as a few years since, while in possession of the Turks, was a considerable commercial town, when it is said to have carried on, in fish and pretty girls, a very lucrative trade with Stamboul and Trebizond.

The Ingour abounds with fish, particularly the sturgeon: there are also salmon and herrings; the latter, though diminutive in size, are of the most exquisite flavour. But, singular to say, like the Celts of our own country, the natives of these provinces, and the Tartars of the Crimea, rarely make use of fish as an article of food. If we may be allowed to form an opinion from this circumstance, and from the general similarity of their habits, as detailed to us by some Russian officers, who had been quartered among them for several years, they would appear to have been originally of the same family.

Along the whole of this coast of the Black Sea, particularly between the river Ingour and the Agis, is found that very rare fish called the *cephalo*, from

whose eggs the most recherché caviare is made, a delicacy at one time held in the highest estimation by the accomplished gourmands of Stamboul. But since the Turks have lost these provinces, the fishery, which was so profitable to the natives, has been completely abandoned, and the town of Anakria nearly deserted.

In truth, the whole of the settlements we had visited since we left the Crimea, and which figure on the Russian chart under the high-sounding appellation of fortresses, whatever they may have been under the rule of the Turk, consist at present of nothing better than dilapidated walls and intrenchments: most likely the natives, being Mahometans, emigrated to Turkey, when these provinces fell under the rule of Russia. Nevertheless, however insignificant, each had a vessel or vessels of war at anchor before it, which saluted us, and we of course returned the civility; and assuredly, never since the invention of gunpowder were the natives of Circassia serenaded with such uproarious music, which must at least have had the effect of causing them to suspend their agricultural employments for the more warlike ones of arming themselves, stationing picquets,—in short, of preparing to meet the expected invasion.

A few miles beyond Souchom-Kalé, the pro-

vince of Mingrelia commences, when we bade adieu to the delightful country of Circassia. The first aspect of Mingrelia was by no means calculated to impress us with a favourable idea of that Russian province, since the mountains in all their picturesque variety, that had so long cheered us on our coasting voyage, now receded from the shore to a considerable distance, leaving an immense plain covered with impenetrable forests, quite as savage in appearance and depopulated as any I had seen in the wilds of South America; but, beyond these, in the far distance at the foot of the Caucasian Alps, we occasionally caught a glimpse of the high lands of Imeritia, and the country of the Circassian Suoni tribes, beautifully laid out in agricultural fields, and so thickly studded with cottages, as to indicate a very numerous population.

On approaching Redout-Kalé, the weather, which had been hitherto delightful, suddenly changed to violent rain and high winds. The aspect of the sea was frightful, the waves running mountains high; but most fortunately its worst fury had been spent, as the captain of a Russian brig of war we spoke with assured us that it had been blowing quite a hurricane for several days. It would appear from the accounts of the Russian sailors, that this part of the Euxine is frequently visited by storms, particularly in the

vicinity of the rivers Phase and Khopi, which they attributed to the clouds and vapours being driven into this contracted part of the sea and then intercepted by the Caucasian Alps, until, after successive accumulations, they burst forth in tempests, and continue, not like those of Europe for a few hours, but for days, with scarcely any interruption.

We cast anchor about half a mile distant from the mouth of the Khopi, the ancient Cyannes, with the intention of taking to our boats and sailing up that famous river to visit the town and fortress of Redout-Kalé; but this, in the present state of the turbulent sea, appeared an undertaking of some difficulty and no little peril. The prudence of attempting such a voyage was long debated, for there was not the slightest appearance of an opening through the foaming bar, that rose like a mountain before us; indeed, the whole shore, as far as the eye could reach, was guarded by a boiling surge resembling a vast rampart of snow.

At length, the captain of the corvette having given his opinion that it was possible to cross the bar, our autocrat, a spirited man, was one of the first to jump into the boat; but as there was some slight appearance of danger, our party, this time at least, consisted of very few: to the honour, however, of our fair companions, every one

volunteered to accompany us. The consuls of England and France followed their own timid counsels, and clung to the ponderous walls of the corvette, declaring they would not venture through such a surge, if a kingdom were to be the prize!

We had, indeed, a severe contest with the boisterous element; and as our little barks frequently bounded against the sands, and again ascended the summit of a mountain wave, not a few of our party, unaccustomed to such stormy navigation, exhibited every symptom of intense fear; but brave hearts and skilful rowers proved victorious, and we entered the mouth of the Khopi in safety, though not without encountering another peril. This was caused by the river being much swollen by the late rains; and the mountain torrents having swept down numbers of uprooted trees, these were now battling against the surge at the bar, and interposed a formidable obstacle to our progress. This also being happily surmounted, we found ourselves in the river, which flowed tranquil as a lake, with a depth of water sufficient to receive vessels of considerable burden; from whence we glided onward, without any further interruption, till we came to Redout-Kalé, which might have been between three or four wersts distant.

About two wersts from the mouth of the Khopi, we came to another river called the Syba, which, though narrow, is said to be considerably deeper than the Khopi. Here the idea immediately occurs to the traveller, that this would have been the preferable site upon which to erect a commercial town; but on inquiry we found that, owing to the flatness of the surrounding country, it is often exposed to serious inundations from the frequency of rain in the Alps, and the number of torrents that empty their waters into the Khopi.

How easily might this inconvenience be remedied by the simple expedient of a few embankments! A very small outlay of capital would be sufficient to clear away the sand at the mouth of the river, render it navigable, and consequently improve the fertility and salubrity of the adjacent country; for, let it be remembered, that when the bar is once passed, we enter a depth of water varying from twenty feet to six or seven, and extending to a distance of from eight to ten wersts. The Khopi, which taken altogether is a fine river, rises in the Alps, from whence it fertilizes, on its way to the Euxine, the plains of Mingrelia. The whole course of this river is computed to be about a hundred wersts.

The country in the vicinity of Redout-Kalé presents one monotonous flat; the soil, of a deep

dark mould, is rich to exuberance. Here and there might be seen a marsh of considerable extent, covered with reeds and sedges, which had attained in this land of nature a most incredible height, and I do not exaggerate when I say that the reeds exceeded fourteen feet; but the exhalations emitted by these swamps too plainly told that death lay in their vicinity. Indeed, you cannot conceive anything more prejudicial to health than the moist and heated atmosphere of these countries in wet weather; the air is then continually charged with a miasma, the most relaxing and debilitating to the frame of man.

I was much disappointed in the aspect of Redout-Kalé, particularly as, from the accounts I had previously received, I expected to have found a very considerable town, populous and commercial; instead of which, it is one of the most miserable places you can imagine. There was not a single trading vessel belonging to any nation whatever in the river; its spacious bazaars, so lately filled with the productions of Europe, were all closed, and the remnant of its sallow-complexioned inhabitants seemed to have nothing better to occupy their time than to sit the whole day upon little bulrush mats, smoke the tchibouque, and gaze at the stranger.

This great change in the destiny of Redout-

Kalé has been effected by the impolitic conduct of the Russian government, which, ever solicitous to throw impediments in the way of British industry, imposed heavy restrictive duties on all foreign manufactures: these of course operated their usual effect, that of turning away the channel of commerce from the town. Prior to this, Redout-Kalé was the great depôt for English manufactures on their way to Persia, Georgia, and the neighbouring eastern provinces of Russia and Turkey, being conveyed thither from this place by caravans. The merchant, finding it impossible to sustain himself against so many vexatious restrictions, removed with his capital and industry to the more liberal government of the Sultan, and settled at Trebizond; since which time that town has risen, and continues rising, to a state of prosperity and commercial enterprise unequalled in any other port of the Euxine. Thus the Russian government has the double mortification of seeing commerce, that great civiliser of nations, transferred to a power which it is her interest to weaken, and her own eastern provinces thrown back on their own inadequate resources.

Since this event, the Russian government, not having correctly calculated the consequence of its restrictive duties, and too late conscious of

its loss, made several ineffectual attempts, by the introduction of a more liberal system, to re-establish commercial intercourse between Redout-Kalé and the European merchants who were accustomed to visit it. This plan has not, however, succeeded, as is ever the case when the stream of commerce has once changed its course. Independently of this, there is also another insuperable barrier against the prosperity of this unlucky town, arising from the great prevalence of fevers, particularly during autumn, when the mephitic air is so powerful, that the stranger is nearly certain of imbibing infection who merely sleeps one night within its pestiferous walls. In order to escape its influence, the merchants and traders were formerly obliged to hurry on board the vessels lying outside the bar every evening, and there pass the night; and if we had no other evidence, the bloated sallow countenances of the Russian soldiers belonging to the garrison that I now saw, sufficiently indicated the noxious quality of the air.

The attempt to re-establish commerce at this port having failed, Poti on the Phase, being situated twenty or thirty leagues nearer the Turkish frontier, and consequently considered a more desirable entrepôt for commerce, is about to be declared a free port, with the intention of draw-

ing away capital and enterprise from the prosperous rival Trebizond. I much doubt, however, whether the speculation will succeed to the extent anticipated by the Russian authorities; for vessels entering the Phase are subject to the same inconveniences, from the shallowness of the bar, as those which pass into the Khopi, and the town of Poti, owing to the marshes in its vicinity, is considered by no means a healthy station.

But to return to Redout-Kalé: the town is built for the most part on piles, with the exception of the main street, which is composed of a long range of houses, or bazaars, extending to at least a werst in length: these, which are only one story high, are all constructed of wood, with little verandahs in front, and the ground being low, whenever the river rises beyond the common height, the town is completely inundated.

While lounging through the streets, I perceived a greater variety in the dresses of the inhabitants than I had hitherto seen in these provinces; and as each retained their separate costume, Georgians, Persians, Mingrelians, Gourials, and Immeritians, were separately pointed out to me: the whole were armed except the Georgians, Persians, and Armenians, who simply carried in a belt of red silk a large poniard with an ivory

handle : the costume of these was a blouse of blue cloth, the sleeves open at the elbow, wide Turkish trowsers, and a high cap of black Astrakan fur.

The dress of the Mingrelians somewhat resembled that of their neighbours the Circassians; but in general they were very much inferior in personal appearance, the majority of those we saw being rather below than above the middle height. The whole of the inhabitants of these provinces have the custom, like most eastern nations, of shaving the head : instead of a turban they cover it with a thick fur cap, usually of lamb-skin, and they must have been possessed of most salamander constitutions; for though it was now noon day, and the weather excessively warm, not a few had enveloped themselves in immense black mantles made from plaited goats' hair, which must have been, independent of its inconvenience, a burden of no inconsiderable weight for the bearer to support; but probably, like those of the Spaniard, they serve the double purpose of a protection against the heat of the sun and the inclemency of the weather.

It appears that the peasants of Mingrelia do not speak the Circassian dialect, which is only used by the princes and nobles, who claim a common origin with the untameable spirits of Circas-

sia, and never intermarry with the daughters of any other of the Caucasian tribes. The correctness of this was confirmed by the Russian officers of the garrison, from whom we received many interesting details respecting these provinces and their inhabitants, and who represented the nobles of Mingrelia, and indeed nearly the whole of those of the Caucasian provinces, as a race altogether distinct from their dependants, being everywhere distinguished by the same regular features and athletic form, the same bold daring and contempt of danger, as the intrepid mountaineer of Circassia, whom they also resemble in their attachment for fine weapons and beautiful horses, in their impatience of control, love of liberty, and dexterity in the performance of warlike exercises. It is remarkable, that in whatever country this singular race have established themselves, they have been distinguished for the most undoubted bravery. In Egypt, under the name of Mamelukes, although a mere handful of men, it is well known that they maintained themselves independent in defiance of the whole force of Mehemet Ali, who, finding that he could not subdue them by open force, had recourse to a massacre so treacherous and horrible, that it would have disgraced an African savage.

In Mingrelia, as well as in the other Caucasian

provinces we visited, both noble and peasant never leave home without being well armed ; and as this privilege is not usually extended to the subjects of Russia, we must infer that either her power is not yet fully established over these countries, or that she only exercises a species of feudal sovereignty, in which the inhabitants are still left in possession of their independence. Be this as it may, their condition has been in many respects considerably ameliorated since they have fallen under her sceptre ; they are now no longer continually exposed to the devastating inroads of their neighbours the Turks and Persians ; property is respected, and no rapacious Pacha can rob the peasant of his hard earnings : they also retain many of their laws and institutions, and are left in a great measure to the rule of their own princes, while in religion they enjoy the most perfect liberty of conscience.

Notwithstanding all these privileges, such is their hatred of foreign rule, that they never omit an opportunity of evincing their hostility towards the Russian government, if not openly, at least by aiding their neighbours the Circassians, whom it is said they supply with ammunition, and even frequently join their ranks. The Russian soldier may, however, felicitate himself upon possessing one advantage over his com-

rades stationed in the fortresses of Circassia; he has only a single enemy to contend with—marsh miasma, rarely experiencing any inconvenience from the hostility of the natives, with whom he mingles upon the most friendly terms.

As you may suppose, I felt not a little surprised on learning that a Mr. Marr, an enterprising son of Caledonia, was a resident in this very remote country. He had been originally settled as a merchant at Redout-Kalé, but on the extinction of commerce in that town, retired into the interior and became a farmer; Prince Dabian of Mingrelia, with whom he is a great favourite, having presented him with a grant of land. It appears that the miasma, so prejudicial to the Russian garrison on the coast, does not extend into the interior; for the officers, who frequently visit the Scot, informed me that both himself and family were enjoying the most robust health. His sons, who had been educated with great care in Europe, on their return to their father, such is the force of example, completely assimilated themselves to the manners of the natives: and the young Caledonians may now be numbered among the most daring hunters in the wilds of Mingrelia, where at least they are always certain of finding plenty of sport; for besides that the forests abound with deer, boars, and bears,—buffaloes, sheep, and horses are frequently met with in a wild state.

LETTER XXX.

RETURN TO THE CRIMEA—RUSSIAN SEAMANSHIP—A REAR-ADMIRAL—FORTUNATE ESCAPE FROM SHIPWRECK—FIRST VIEW OF MOUNT ELBEROUS—DIFFICULTY OF LANDING AT BOMBORA — VISIT TO THE FORTRESS — EXTRAORDINARY FERTILITY OF THE SOIL—NUMBER OF REPTILES—LAND TORTOISE—HOSPITALITY OF THE ABASIANS—TOWN OF BOMBORA—NOBLE OF ABASIA—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ABASIANS.

THE continuance of tempestuous weather and violent rains had now taken from our voyage all its charms, for hitherto we glided over the bosom of the Euxine, enjoying as much tranquillity and pleasure as if engaged in a boating excursion on the calm expanse of one of our own pretty little lakes in Cumberland; and our party, who until now had passed their time in gaiety and amusement, were with few exceptions suffering from sea-sickness, and of course continually expressed themselves weary of trusting their enjoyment to the caprice of so fickle an element. The original plan, therefore, of visiting the river Phase, the Russian fortress Kionskia, the Turkish provinces

Armenia, Sivias, Anadolia, together with the towns of Trebizond and Sinope, was abandoned, and our immediate return to the Crimea decided upon.

Having regained our vessels, the necessary preparations were made for departure; but the storm increasing, and the swell of the sea being very great, we were obliged to remain at anchor in the roads during the night. Under these circumstances, and in order to ensure more fully the safety of his noble freight, our rear-admiral volunteered to keep the watch on board the steamer; but whether the juice of the grape, so liberally circulated at the table of his excellency, or the malicious influence of Morpheus, had the effect of steeping his senses in sweet forgetfulness, I know not; but certain it is, our *rare* admiral fell into a profound slumber, and was only awakened from his delightful dreams by the loud exclamations of one of the sailors, who discovered that the anchor had slipped its moorings, and our little vessel was fast drifting towards the tremendous corvette.

As a remedy against the danger, the admiral and the captain proposed that the steam should be immediately got up! Now all persons conversant in any degree with steam navigation are aware that this undertaking, particularly when the boiler is cold, cannot be effected in a few minutes,

and in the present instance our vessel was so near the corvette, that before the boiler could have been heated we should have been most probably sleeping with the fishes.

Fortunately our safety was confided to an abler guardian, for we had on board an English mate; his name has now escaped my memory, but of whose conduct and abilities I cannot speak too highly. His quick comprehension not only saw the danger, but provided a remedy, and, like an intrepid Briton, at the risk of his life, for the sea was frightfully convulsed, he jumped into a boat with two of his best sailors, carrying with him an anchor; and, indeed, to his exertions we may principally attribute our deliverance from the impending peril. The captain of the corvette also aided his endeavours, so far as circumstances would permit, by repeated warpings, till the steam was in sufficient force to set the machinery in motion.

During the whole of this time, as may well be supposed, the scene on the deck of the steamer baffled description. Fortunately the women with their attendants happened to be on board the corvette; but the remaining passengers, aroused from their slumbers, and exaggerating the danger by their fears, rushed in their *robes de nuit* upon deck, where they stood trembling,—nobles and serfs mingled together for the first time, and re-

gardless of the pelting rain, remained counting the moments that were likely to intervene between them and eternity. Truth to say, the vessels at one time were within a few paces of coming in collision: if this had taken place, the steamboat stood a fair chance of seeing the bottom of the Euxine, and, from the very heavy surge, I doubt much whether the boats of the corvette could have rendered us any very effectual assistance. The weather having changed somewhat for the better, the following morning we continued our voyage homeward, for the anchorage is so bad in the roads of Redout-Kalé, that in the event of another storm occurring, we could not have anticipated with any confidence shelter and security.

We now stood out at a considerable distance from the shore, and occasionally caught, in spite of the hazy atmosphere, a momentary glimpse of the Caucasian Alps, whose highest peak, the stupendous Elberous, rising nearly 17,000 feet above the level of the sea, seemed like a mighty pyramid of snow enveloped in clouds so dark, that from the contrast they appeared of a jet black.

We had not been long at sea, when it was discovered that the boiler of the steam engine required cleaning, which obliged us to make for the

first Russian fortress; accordingly we reached Bombora in Abasia the following day, being the only one that we had not previously visited. To effect a landing at this place was indeed a difficult enterprise, there being neither bay, harbour, nor any other accommodation for that purpose: add to this, the storm of the preceding evening had left a very considerable swell.

In anticipation of these difficulties, the commanding officer of the garrison ordered a company of soldiers to carry the passengers from the boats to the shore. This was a command more easy to give than to execute, as it required no small degree of expertness even to lay hold of our barks, now tossed on the summit of the wave, and then plunged into the watery valley: he was indeed fortunate among our party, who landed without any other inconvenience than a thorough drenching; for several, swept by the violence of the swell, were obliged to swim for their lives, the whole forming, as you may suppose, a scene sufficiently ludicrous to draw forth loud peals of laughter.

The ladies bravely determined to follow our example, and land in defiance of the angry element. They, however, fortunately fared much better than we did, the captain of the corvette having succeeded in running his light gig with the swell

of the wave so completely ashore, so as to get beyond the reach of the enemy.

After visiting the fortifications on the coast, and the ruins of a church and monastery built by the Genoese, we continued our route to the principal fortress, distant about three wersts. Like that at Pitzounda, our way led for some time through a dense forest: here we perceived the box, which in Europe is a dwarf shrub, a perfect giant of the forest; the juniper of such colossal dimensions as to measure fifteen feet in circumference; and the oak, with the largest leaves I had ever seen, adorning the valleys and lining the sides of the lofty hills in such abundance, as to create the belief that Russia might here alone find a nursery sufficient to furnish her with wood for ship-building during centuries.

The arbutus andrachne, the oleander and the tamarisk, the olive and the fig, the rhododendron and the pomegranate, were everywhere to be seen in all their variegated tints and rich luxuriance. Besides these, even the earth seemed covered with the richest plants; and the most beautiful blossoms shed around their aromatic fragrance.

At every step I discovered some new production unknown to Europe, and every breeze wafted a thousand odours. Nor were the birds that filled

the air with their delightful warblings, the insects and reptiles that luxuriated among the long grass and flowers, less interesting : and I was not more pleased with their many-coloured plumage and gaily-painted wings, than astonished at their gigantic size, particularly the common lizard, which here measures eighteen inches in length, and were it not from its bright green changing from the dark hue of the emerald to that of the first leaf in spring, you might be inclined to suppose it a young crocodile.

While following the windings of a murmuring rivulet, the Phandra, the endless numbers of toads and serpents we encountered, crawling in every direction in this land of nature, drew from the more timid members of our party many a shriek. The latter, of a large species, are not considered venomous, and a native of the Archipelago or Stamboul would have been in raptures at the sight of his much-prized dainty, the land tortoise; for we were absolutely obliged to walk most cautiously, or we should have crushed them at every step. The natives of this part of Circassia never use them as food; but in the countries I have mentioned they are highly valued for their flavour and nutritious qualities, and are generally considered to be most efficacious in pulmonary disorders.

We were much disappointed at not meeting with Michael Scharavaschedze, chief of the Pso tribe, inhabiting the neighbourhood of Bombora, who I understood was educated in St. Petersburg, and an officer in the Russian service; but, strange to say, although he has long given in his adhesion to the government, yet we were told the usual story, that not a single soldier can absent himself to any distance from the fort without danger of being shot or taken prisoner. In addition to this, we learned among other things that the hostility of the natives was increasing, and that the garrison had suffered considerably from an attack made by the Circassians some months previously, and which had been conducted with a fury and an address they had never before exhibited. We were also informed, that since the strictness of the blockade prevents the people from obtaining a sufficient supply of powder, they have adopted the expedient of the lasso in capturing the soldiers of the garrison, who are thus led off to the mountains without being able to offer any effectual resistance.

After visiting the fortress, we took a lounge through the little town of Bombora, or Lehna, as the inhabitants call it, one of the few towns built by the Circassians, but displaying no feature distinct from those we find on the

opposite coast of the Black Sea in Asia Minor. The few bazaars were kept by Armenian and Karaite Jew traders, filled with coarse Russian manufactures, only remarkable for their gaudy colours, together with a few tinsel gew-gaws for the use of the peasants, and salt and tobacco.

In one of these bazaars we met a noble of the country, who had just come down from the mountains to effect some trifling barter: he was completely armed, and, as is usual with this people, accompanied by his squire. It would appear that the natives of this part of Circassia were not inspired with more confidence in Russian faith than was exhibited by their compatriots at Anapa; for during the whole time the chief remained in the town, his squire held a loaded pistol in his hand on the cock: no doubt with the intention of firing at any one that might threaten the safety of his lord. The noble, though a fine daring-looking fellow, seeing himself surrounded by a crowd of gaily-dressed officers and fair ladies, was evidently annoyed at being the object of so much observation, and, conscious perhaps of his hostility to Russia, evinced the greatest anxiety to depart; consequently, when his little commercial arrangements were concluded, he vaulted into his saddle, flew out of the town and up the sides of the mountains

like lightning, most probably not considering himself safe as long as he remained within reach of the guns of the fort.

While lounging about the town, I observed several of the natives on horseback; and though the spur is no novel appendage to the boot of a cavalier, yet I confess it appeared a singular addition to a sandal made from the bark of the linden, but more particularly when it was attached to the heel of one who wore neither sandal nor *papooshe*, which was very frequently the case. The few women we saw were rather tastefully dressed, with long white veils not altogether intended to conceal the features of the wearer from observation, as is usually the case with the followers of Islamism: hence we had an opportunity of deciding that they were in general pretty.

The whole of the men were armed with a poniard, a gun, or a sabre; they kept aloof in groupes, generally with their arms a-kimbo, and, to judge from the expression of their countenances, seemed to regard us rather with contempt than curiosity. Their personal appearance, like that of their countrymen in general, was in their favour; but in these, I thought the aquiline nose of the Romans predominated. That the Genoese here had a settlement cannot be doubted. The ruins of the church not only showed that the

architecture was Italian, but in wandering through the broken fragments of tombstones, we discovered one which bore the name of GUISEP ——. I also found in Bombora a piece of marble beautifully sculptured, with a Roman eagle and the characters IMP :-CÆ— engraved upon it, which renders it highly probable that Imperial Rome had here a settlement.

We purchased from the natives and the Armenian merchants at Bombora, a number of splendid sabres and poniards of the very finest workmanship, and evidently of great antiquity, but so well preserved, that they appeared as if they had only yesterday left the hands of the armourer: several of the blades were engraved, or inlaid with gold characters. There were also full-length inscriptions on some of them, surmounted with the head of our Saviour, or a saint, which generally ran thus,—*Parmi Dey y par my Rey.—Ne me tire pas sans raison, et ne me remets pas sans honneur.*

From the number of weapons found among this people of European fabrication, and said to have belonged to the Crusaders, it is highly probable that the natives of the Caucasus were engaged in war against the Christians: or perhaps the soldiers of the cross, having been captured by the Turks, escaped from them to the mountains of the Caucasus; but being considerably the

minority in the population, adopted, in process of time, the manners, customs, and religion of the natives, and finally became amalgamated with them.

This opinion is corroborated by a fact, which I give you on the united testimony of several Armenian merchants who had visited that part of the country. It appears that at the base of the Caucasus a tribe still exists called Khervisour, who have preserved among them Christianity to the present day, and in manners and customs differ entirely from every other, and are not exceeded by any in bravery or in their love of independence. They are still habited in ancient armour, the figure of a cross distinguishes their bucklers, and one of red cloth is constantly worn on the breast. It is generally supposed, from the similarity of their weapons with those of the Normans and French of the middle ages, that they are descended from Gallic ancestors.

We were also informed by the Armenian merchants, that in the interior of Abasia, between Soubachi and the Alps, a greater number of remnants of the ancient Christians exist than in any other part of Circassia. Several churches are in tolerable preservation, and, from the accounts of our informants, must have been fine buildings. They also assured us that some of them even still

contained the sacred books and ancient armour which, according to the traditions of the natives, were deposited there by a band of christian warriors as votive offerings, in gratitude for their deliverance from the infidels. At all events, a statement of these particulars may serve to guide the research of such future travellers as may be disposed to explore this part of the Caucasian mountains in pursuit of antiquities.

upon foreign supplies for provisions; solitude and pestilence are their companions at home, and if they seek for amusement from field-sports in the beautiful country around, an enemy insidious as the tiger lurks about their path.

Thus, between incessant warfare and pestilence, so great is the destruction of human life, that we cannot think any other christian power would waste the blood of its subjects with such wanton prodigality; for I assure you, the unfavourable picture which truth has obliged me to draw of the Russian settlements in Circassia, so far from being overcharged, has been but too faintly sketched; and what, perhaps, is still more extraordinary, the Russians are not one step nearer the accomplishment of their object—the conquest of Circassia—than they were at the first commencement of hostilities on the banks of the Kouban fifty years ago. Besides, we must consider it the very height of bad policy in a government thus to waste the resources of the country in an undertaking so little calculated to be profitable, or ultimately successful, and which only serves as a drain for its soldiers, who might be much better employed; for if ever a country could be termed the grave of a people, Circassia is that to the soldiers of Russia.

Previously to setting forth on our coasting ex-

pedition round the Black Sea, I heard it very generally said in South Russia, that the conquest of Circassia was consummated, that the Russian flag waved triumphantly over every hill and vale, and that it was only necessary for the governor-general to present himself, to insure the submission of the few hostile chiefs who still obstinately refused to give in their allegiance. Hence, we expected on our voyage to have witnessed the general pacification; to have beheld humanity converting a nation from barbarism to Christianity. How different was the reality from the anticipation! No chief waited upon us to tender his allegiance, and those who pretended to be the allies of Russia were everywhere absent! In short, we found a whole people in arms fighting for their independence with indomitable bravery, and the Russian garrisons daily diminishing by pestilence and the sword.

With respect to the right of Russia to these provinces, I heard the subject repeatedly discussed by my Turkish friends at Constantinople, whose opinions I will communicate to you in a future letter. At present it is merely necessary to observe, that the desolating war carried on against this unhappy people is incompatible with the character for moderation assumed by the Russian government, which declares itself to be actu-

ated in all its diplomatic relations by a desire to uphold every government as it exists, with a determination to advance the progress of Christianity and civilisation,—not by the sword, but by the olive-branch. In consonance with this principle, Greece was severed from Turkey; and in consequence of her cajoling arguments to this effect, England and France were induced to coalesce in the arrangement; for, according to her own inimitable despatches, "The whole of Europe demanded the pacification of the Archipelago, the cessation of a strife which threatened serious danger to the christian world, should the fanatic Turk triumph in the downfal of the Greek."

Assuredly, then, if Russia has no sinister designs upon the liberties of Turkey and the other eastern nations, and if she is, as she pretends to be, actuated by a desire to uphold the interests of nations, such as she professed to be at the pacification of Greece, let her abandon the present contest with the inhabitants of the Caucasus,—a contest whose termination is earnestly desired by every humane man even in Russia itself, many of whose enlightened inhabitants I heard express this opinion. Surely the benevolent Nicholas and his kind-hearted empress, whose characters are represented by their subjects as replete with every virtue, cannot but regret the desolating

war that is now reducing a whole country to misery and ruin.

Must we not think, if Russia were to adopt another line of policy, if she were to renounce every idea of conquest, and follow the example of the Turks by forming with the independent tribes of the Caucasus commercial treaties, much might be done towards promoting their civilisation? And how easy would it be for her to colonise these half-deserted countries,—countries fertile to exuberance, with the superabundant population of Europe. Strabo tells us, that in his day the province of Mingrelia alone was so populous, as to be able to furnish two hundred thousand native soldiers; whereas the inhabitants of Mingrelia, Gurial, and Immeretia, in the present day, do not amount to half the number. From another ancient writer we learn, that it was the nursery of the great Mithridates, king of Pontus, where he not only recruited his army with its bravest soldiers, but found a never-ending supply of the finest timber for shipbuilding in its splendid forests; and during the time imperial Rome occupied this most fertile province, such was the richness of the soil, that it produced four crops annually.

In enumerating the advantages that might be derived from these countries to Russia, it is not

easy to explain why that power, who we know is ever anxious to increase its resources and population, does not encourage the industrious inhabitants of Europe to settle here, by assigning them grants of land; for most certain it is, if these fine provinces were denuded of their immense forests, and the soil properly cultivated, the profit to the agriculturist would be immense. It cannot be that they are not salubrious, for, with the exception of a small portion on the coast of Mingrelia and Gurial, there are no marshes to be found in the whole country; and most of the rivers, which are partially stagnant from their mouths being filled up by the accumulation of ages, might easily be rendered navigable,—thereby adding to the health and beauty of the country. A great part of Immeretia and Georgia, that join Mingrelia and Gurial, cannot be exceeded in fertility and salubrity. And as the whole of these provinces are subject, since the treaty of Adrianople, to the uncontrolled rule of Russia, would it not be infinitely more advantageous to her interests to leave the Circassians at present their wild independence; and, instead of maintaining in their country expensive garrisons, to improve her own provinces? Would it not also be preferable to bestow on them a portion of the cost and labour lavished on the unimprovable woodless steppes of Krim-Tartary?

Yet singular to say, for some reason I am unable to fathom, the Russian government appears wholly regardless of the welfare of its possessions on this part of the Black Sea. It cannot be that they will not repay cultivation: the soil is not only adapted to the growth of every species of grain, but cotton, tobacco, and indigo. The vine is indigenous; all the fruits of the most favoured climes in Europe are found wild in the woods; and to show their value as pasture-lands, the grass attains a luxuriance totally unknown in Europe.

In fact, the plan that Russia ought to adopt for the purpose of placing these countries once more in the position nature designed them to occupy, is colonisation; and if we would seek for a practical exemplification of the description of colonisation peculiarly adapted to these provinces, we have only to refer to the *ver sacrum* of ancient Greece. This system would be still more applicable to the Circassians, who, jealous of their liberty, regard with suspicion every attempt made by foreigners to acquire settlements among them.

But the plan of colonisation to which I have alluded, was founded neither in usurpation nor injustice, being based solely on commercial pursuits, and the mutual interests of nations. To this the southern countries of Europe, and part

of Asia, owe their civilisation; for Greece at that time was suffering from a superabundant population, invariably the case when a country attains a high state of civilisation; and so pressing had the evil become, that the citizens of the highest rank, the most distinguished among their countrymen for talents, virtue, and courage, put themselves at the head of the youth, and, full of ardour and vigour, founded towns and countries, even in the midst of savages, on the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, and the Black Sea.

Several of these heroes of ancient Greece were celebrated by Homer and other writers; and there cannot be a doubt that the famous expedition of Jason was undertaken for the same purpose, as in every country on the Black Sea we are perpetually reminded of him and his followers. In the Colchideus a plain still bears the name of Argo, the son of Phryxus; and the temple of Seucoth was built by Jason himself, who also founded Idessa, a town in Georgia. Sinope, in Anadolia, was built by Argo; and the once-famous Dioscurias owes its origin to the followers of Castor and Pollux. There is, even to this day, a cape on the Anadolian coast called after Jason.

Tacitus tells us that Jason performed a second voyage to the Black Sea, when he gave laws to

his followers, and founded new colonies on the banks of the Phase and the Khopi. In short, nearly the whole of the population on the shores of the Caspian Sea, the Iberians and Albanians, together with the greater number of the inhabitants of Lazestahn and Armenia, still proudly retain the tradition of being descended from the noble followers of that great hero and navigator. And assuredly, if no other proofs existed than fine features and symmetrical proportions, might we not deem these sufficient to prove their noble origin? The correctness or fallacy of this opinion will, however, be established when the countries of the Caucasus are better known, abounding, as it is said they do, with the medals and ruins of ancient Greece.

In truth, it is impossible that countries possessing such natural advantages, whether we regard situation, climate, or productions, should continue for any lengthened period in their present benighted state. Commerce and steam navigation, encouraged by the leading powers of Europe in their desire to maintain peace, will effect in a few years an entire revolution in the manners, opinions, and customs of the inhabitants of these countries; and this in opposition to the short-sighted policy of Russia, who desires to shroud them in obscurity.

This is no visionary expectation. Do we not already see countries, scarcely known to our fathers even by name, now visited by the ships of civilised Europe, even to the icy regions of the north? and travellers, regardless of personal danger or inconveniences, traversing the most remote regions, disseminating knowledge, and improving the character and condition of the inhabitants?

But to return to our subject of colonisation. Every consideration, whether of humanity or just policy, that I can urge to induce the Russian government to turn aside the devastating sword from the humble hearths of the mountaineers of the Caucasus, will, alas! I am afraid, be ineffectual. No; if I were possessed of the eloquence of Demosthenes, it would avail nothing. Conquest! dominion! is, unhappily for their less powerful neighbours, the actuating principle of the government, and the majority of the Russian nobility. Already, in anticipation of the conquest of Circassia, have the most beautiful, the most picturesque sites on the coast been pointed out for the erection of châteaux and palaces; and vain would it be to search in Russia for such a man as the disinterested, the noble-minded Jason, to put himself at the head of a band of colonists, whose aim would not be so much profit, as the moral and intellectual improvement of the people.

Without entering into the question as to the justice or injustice of the conquests of Russia, and their ultimate influence upon the liberties of Europe, it must be confessed that they are, so far as regards Asia, followed by the advancement of civilisation and the march of intellect!—the people are taught to read, write, pray, obey the emperor as their sovereign lord, and to regard with the most submissive reverence their superiors in rank—all admirable in their way. But I doubt much if civilisation, as introduced by Russia, would tend to make a spirited people like the Circassians, who regard independence as the greatest of all earthly blessings, happier; for, besides a thousand imaginary wants that would then spring into existence, and of which they are now happily ignorant, accursed gold, with all its train of evils, would corrupt their morals and poison their contentment. Thousands of needy adventurers, armed with the knout, would overrun the land, and sever for ever the tie that has bound, from time immemorial, the clansman to his lord. Then this high-spirited people, whose extraordinary bravery has been the admiration of ages, would be reduced to abject slavery, and their very name, existence, and country merged in that of their conqueror: while, to the romantic, the poetic mind, the fall

of Circassia would be irreparable, and the world would never again witness the haughty chieftain in his coat of mail, marching at the head of his clansmen to victory or death, nor the noble dame, or heroic sister, rejoicing in the death of the beloved husband, son, or brother, who died in defending the liberties of his country.

It was, indeed, the intention of his excellency the governor-general, ever anxious to advance the interests of his sovereign, to establish a colony of Swiss mountaineers, either at Soudjouk-Kalé, or Ghelendjik, for which purpose he was attended during the expedition by a gentleman from Switzerland; but such was the unceasing hostility evinced by the natives against every measure emanating from Russia, that to contemplate any such plan in Circassia at the present moment would be impossible; for along the whole line of coast from Kouban-Tartary to the port of Anakria in Mingrelia, the Russian government does not possess a foot of land, with the exception of the forts, or rather mud entrenchments we visited, and these are constantly besieged by the indefatigable mountaineers.

Thus the amelioration of the half-civilised inhabitants of the Caucasus, their advancement in knowledge and all the humanising arts of

social life, which would be the result if commerce and a proper system of colonisation were introduced by the enlightened inhabitants of Western Europe, are sacrificed to the self-aggrandisement of a power whose limits know no bounds, and to extend which, she is ever ready to trample upon the rights of every nation too feeble to resist the force of her arms, and to pay, as the price of her conquests, the lives of her subjects and the wealth of her treasury.

Never was I more fully convinced of the truth of this, than by the spectacle presented during our excursions on the Circassian coast. And how much is it to be lamented that Russia, as a christian power, now that the Turks, with their ignorance, fanaticism, and superstition, have been expelled from these beautiful but benighted provinces, has not adopted a more conciliatory line of policy with the natives, instead of inflicting upon them all the horrors of war — a policy which would not only tend to civilise, but to instruct them in the truths of Christianity.

TARTAR PEASANTS.

LETTER XXXII.

RETURN TO THE CRIMEA—ENGLISH RESIDENTS—DEPARTURE FOR THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF KRIM-TARTARY—ASCENT OF THE AI-PETRI—SCENERY—SINGULAR STEPPE ON THE SUMMIT OF THE MOUNTAIN—PERILOUS DESCENT—HOSPITABLE RECEPTION AT THE HOUSE OF A MOURZA—ASPECT OF THE INHABITANTS—TARTAR VILLAGES—GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE COUNTRY—TENDENCY OF MAHOMETANISM.

We now bade adieu to the Caucasus, steering with a fair wind for the Crimea, where we arrived, after a delightful voyage of a few days, and landed at Yalta, some wersts distant from the country-seat of Count Worrenzow, to which we immediately proceeded.

Thus terminated my coasting tour, which, so far as regarded the Circassians, had produced no other effect than to stimulate my curiosity; and this I was determined to gratify at all hazards, as soon as I had discovered the most practicable method of penetrating into the interior of the country. In the interim, I purposed availing myself of the opportunity I possessed to explore some portion of the ancient dominions of the Khans of Krim-Tartary.

The south coast of this peninsula, with its valleys, mountains, and romantic scenery, is not inappropriately termed the Switzerland of Russia; and, during summer, is generally filled with Russian travellers of distinction, who this year had come, in greater numbers than usual, to learn from the governor-general the details of his interesting voyage: in consequence of which, the château of his excellency became the scene of a series of splendid entertainments: the vessels of war that accompanied us lay at anchor in the bay of Aloupka: the officers were the daily guests of the count, and the midshipmen those of his son, a fine youth of fourteen.

As the details of our host's hospitable festivities cannot prove interesting to you, I shall forbear giving them, especially as my taste for retirement and solitary rambles rendered me, for

the most part, an absentee from their gaieties. I spent my time principally in ascending the lofty hills, exploring the secluded valleys, and visiting the peaceful cots of the kind Tartars. I was also fortunate in meeting several of my countrymen; for his excellency, being well aware of their superior intelligence and industry, employs them in preference to the natives of any other country. His own splendid château at Aloupka, designed by Mr. Blore of London, and erecting under the able superintendence of Mr. Hunt, will remain a lasting monument of English taste. His steward and *homme d'affaires* is Mr. Jackson; his most trusted physician, Dr. Prout; the governess of his only daughter, Mrs. Amet; to Mr. Upton, an English engineer, he has delegated the construction of the Admiralty docks at Sebastopol; and, through his recommendation, the laying out of the magnificent park and pleasure-ground belonging to the emperor at Orianda has been confided to Mr. Ross, a native of Scotland.

In every person he has selected, Count W. has been most fortunate; and, whether we consider their superior talents or exemplary conduct, they are worthy of their country. During my rambles through the Crimea, I was alternately the guest of each; so that I do not

depend merely upon rumour for my testimony in their favour. In the society of the intellectual and excellent Dr. Prout, I possessed a never-failing resource: and I shall ever remember with pleasure the days I spent with him and his amiable family at their pretty little villa at Marsanda, and the agreeable rides and promenades we made together through the beautiful scenery in the neighbourhood.

To the accounts of my countrymen I am indebted for many interesting details of the Crimea and its inhabitants,—details which it would have been impossible for me to acquire, if left to my own unassisted resources. But, above all, I have to thank the governor-general for the various facilities he placed at my disposal for the prosecution of my journey. I was presented with a firman in the Tartar language, which would insure horses and other conveniences during my route. My kind host also permitted one of his aides-de-camp, Count Galateri, to accompany me, together with his dragoman, M. Courlanzoff, a talented young Russian, who had recently returned from China.

Our first excursion to the interior of the country lay through Bagtche-Serai, the ancient capital of Krim-Tartary; but, as we had to cross one of the lesser peaks of the stupendous moun-

tain, Ai-Petri, without road, or, indeed, any indication whatever to aid the traveller, we provided ourselves with a Tartar guide and Tartar horses, the only animals who, from the force of habit, can be depended upon in climbing up these perilous rocks, and descending the steep declivities.

On leaving the pretty village of Aloupka, the country gradually ascended, becoming at every step more wildly romantic: after climbing up a precipitous alpine pass, through rocks, tangled brushwood, and trees, we at length attained the dizzy heights above the sea. Being now at a very considerable elevation, we enjoyed a most extensive prospect, comprising some of the boldest scenery in the peninsula: to the right and left we had rocks upon rocks, of stupendous magnitude,—their craggy summits piercing the blue ether, here projecting in vast promontories, there receding, and forming numerous bays,—and before us the boundless expanse of the Euxine.

The view, indeed, embraced a vast horizon; yet, I think, I never beheld a mountain panorama less varied in its features, nor one in which the eye becomes sooner weary. This is owing to the rocks being nearly similar in form, and almost destitute of vegetation, and to the short space intervening between them and the sea;

consequently, the whole of the beautiful scenery along the coast (which, for fertility and rural beauty, cannot be too much admired) becomes in great part lost, or so diminished in size as to be scarcely visible, leaving no other objects to fill up the picture than rocks and water.

Hence the disappointment of many travellers who have ascended these stupendous peaks, with the expectation of being rewarded by a splendid prospect. In short, it is only while wandering on the south coast, where we find luxuriant groves of wild mulberries, pomegranates, pears, figs, laurels, &c., or through its sequestered valleys, with their interesting rural Tartar population, that we are awakened to admiration and pleasure.

On descending about a hundred paces from the rock, we arrived at a mountain plateau, about four wersts in length,—a perfect steppe, entirely destitute of foliage, or any other object to relieve the dreary monotony of this solitary wilderness. From thence we commenced a most terrific descent, through a dense forest of stunted oaks and pines; and neither road nor path presenting itself, our guide seemed to follow the bed of a dried-up waterfall, for the round loose stones kept continually rolling beneath our horses' feet. Dreadful precipices yawned at

every angle, so that one false step would have been sufficient to involve riders and horses in irretrievable destruction.

I attempted to descend by the assistance of my own supporters, but soon found it impossible to maintain my footing: then, as a last resource, I committed my safety to the noble animal that carried me, threw the bridle over his neck, and left him completely to his own guidance. Sometimes, in spite of the sagacious care with which he stepped, the stones gave way, and he slid down several yards, until he perceived the root of a tree, or a large stone, against which he never failed to plant his foot, for the purpose of recovering his equilibrium. The instinctive intelligence he exhibited to avoid falling, was really admirable; and we actually arrived, after a ride of four hours, without the slightest accident, at the base of the mountain. Sometimes, indeed, one or other of our party,—particularly Mr. Richter, an artist from Dresden, who joined us on the road,—not having been accustomed to such neck-breaking equestrianism, was more than once caught in the boughs of the almost impenetrable thickets entwined above our heads, where he hung suspended between earth and heaven, like the Prince of Israel; but, instead of being pierced with a spear, he was greeted by his comrades with loud peals of laughter.

The shades of night had just set in as we arrived at a considerable Tartar village, called Kokkos, where we were most hospitably entertained by a rich mourza, who slew a young kid for the occasion, and treated us, in addition, with several other Eastern delicacies. There were the never-failing pilaff, the chichlik and kefti, together with tarts and preserved fruits of various kinds. Our beds were also those common to the children of the East—mattresses laid on the floor, with cushions and coverlets. The next morning, at day-break, our coffee and tchibouques were ready ; and, after making another hearty meal, we recommenced our journey, not a little gratified with the kind reception of our hospitable host, and also with the extreme cleanliness of every object with which we came in contact.

Our route lay through a fertile valley, watered by the Kabarda,* a considerable stream ; the road

* The name of an extensive province in Circassia. This is a proof, among many others, that the Crimea at some former period acknowledged the sovereignty of the Circassian chieftains, since many of its forts, rivers, ancient buildings and districts, are called by names of Circassian origin. Pallas, the historian of the Crimea, considers the fact sufficiently established, and the writer of these pages has alluded to the subject at greater length in his late work entitled " Travels

was tolerable, and the scenery, if not beautifully picturesque, at least novel, which epithet was also applicable in an especial degree to the costume and manners of the inhabitants. The rocks which skirted the valley, jutting up perpendicularly, and of an equal height, formed a perfect natural fortification; appearing in one place, as if chiselled by the hand of man, and in another resembling piles of gigantic books laid on the shelves of a library. The fields were filled with men, women, and children, either reaping the corn or engaged in some other agricultural pursuit. Here we saw the moullah, with his snow-white turban; the mourza, in his braided coat and cap; together with the peasant, attired in his light jacket, wide trousers, fur cap, and sandals. In the distance might be seen the shepherd, with his long crook, seated on a cliff, surrounded by his bleating flock, and extracting most doleful melody from his pipe.

Then the women were certainly striking objects, wrapped completely in the ample drapery of the white *ferredgé*, which gave them not only a graceful but a coquettish air. Sometimes a youthful dame condescended to present us with a glimpse of her gazelle eye; but, finding she

in the Western Caucasus," when tracing the derivation of the Circassian race.

was observed, again imprisoned her pretty captives behind the folds of her veil. Camels loaded with heavy packages, and looking most serious and important, silently and slowly paced along the road; and that music might not be wanting, we were continually greeted with that most inharmonious of all sounds, the creaking of the Tartar wagons: these, being made entirely of wood, and never greased, formed, when proceeding in trains, a concert of discords which no traveller whose ears have sustained the shock will ever forget.

The appearance of the Tartar villages at a distance is very singular, having much the effect of rabbit-holes. This you will readily believe, when I say that they are generally built on the brow of a hill, or burrowed into its side; and, owing to the circumstance that they consist only of one story, with a single façade, their flat roofs being level with the earth above, I more than once found myself walking on the top of a range of houses, without perceiving my error.

The interior of these odd-looking dwellings was correspondingly original. Here sat the men and women, in true Asiatic style, on the floor, smoking their long pipes; or, by way of cool variety, on the house-tops, or beneath the little verandas, to catch the few breezes as they passed.

The children, with their hair, eyebrows, and finger-nails dyed red according to the most approved notions of Tartar beauty, were playing about without any clothing to impede the freedom of their movements; their little heads often decorated with a profusion of coins, and various amulets to preserve them from sorcery and the evil eye.

Rich Karaite Jews, and Armenians in their peculiarly splendid costume, ambled along on their well-fed mules: these were diversified by considerable numbers of Swabian colonists, in precisely the same close cap, short petticoats of many folds, red stockings, and high-heeled shoes, that we find in Swabia in the present day. Neither must I forget to insert in my catalogue the gipsies, who, unhappily for the Crimea, are too numerous. They are the musicians, showmen, professors of great and petty larceny; in short, the worst part of the population.

Several of the villages through which we passed were exceedingly rural: a running stream was almost invariably the accompaniment; for water, in this parched country, for the purpose of irrigation, is indeed a blessing. Oak, beech, wild-pear, cherry, and crab trees, lined the sides of the cliffs, springing out of every fissure in the rocks;

and the valley itself teemed with orchards, green meadows and corn-fields, occasionally interspersed with the mulberry, fig, pomegranate, apricot, poplar, and walnut trees, whose luxuriant foliage not only formed beautiful and fragrant canopies, and protected us from the scorching rays of the sun, but imparted to the little cots a pleasing appearance of great fertility. The walnut-tree is very popular with the Tartars; for as it grows here to an enormous size, we everywhere find it throwing the broad shade of its wide-spreading foliage over their humble abodes.

As the Tartars profess Mahometanism, each village is adorned with its pretty mosque. How often do I recal to memory the sound of the moullah's voice issuing from the summit of the unpretending minaret, bidding the faithful to prayer! and, though we cannot subscribe to the veracity of their faith, yet true devotion, whether exhibited by Christian or Moslem, must always, we trust, be acceptable to a just and merciful God; and I do not believe that the piety of any people upon the face of the earth is more sincere than that of the Tartars. We have the authority of Paley for believing, that "the man who is in earnest about religion cannot be a bad man." At all events, the

truth of this observation is exemplified in the character of this people; for they are at once unsophisticated, kind-hearted, hospitable, and, above all, strictly honest. Indeed, the simplicity of the forms of the Mahometan religion renders them peculiarly well adapted to the habits of a quiet pastoral people like the Tartars, and every attempt hitherto made by Russian missionaries to convert them to Christianity, has proved abortive.

However, this failure is, in some degree, to be attributed to their implacable hatred of the Russians; and as the creed of Islamism does not inculcate mercy and forgiveness, this feeling is very likely to be perpetuated from generation to generation. Nor can we be surprised at such an inveterate, enduring animosity, when we hear the details of the cruelties, rapine, and barbarities that were perpetrated upon this unhappy people by that most unprincipled adventurer Potemkin and his iniquitous agents; individual instances of which were related to me, both by foreigners and natives, with as much vivacity and freshness of colouring as if they had only happened yesterday. Should you feel desirous of perusing a lengthened catalogue of these atrocities, I would recommend to your notice the life of Catherine II. by T. Castera, said to be

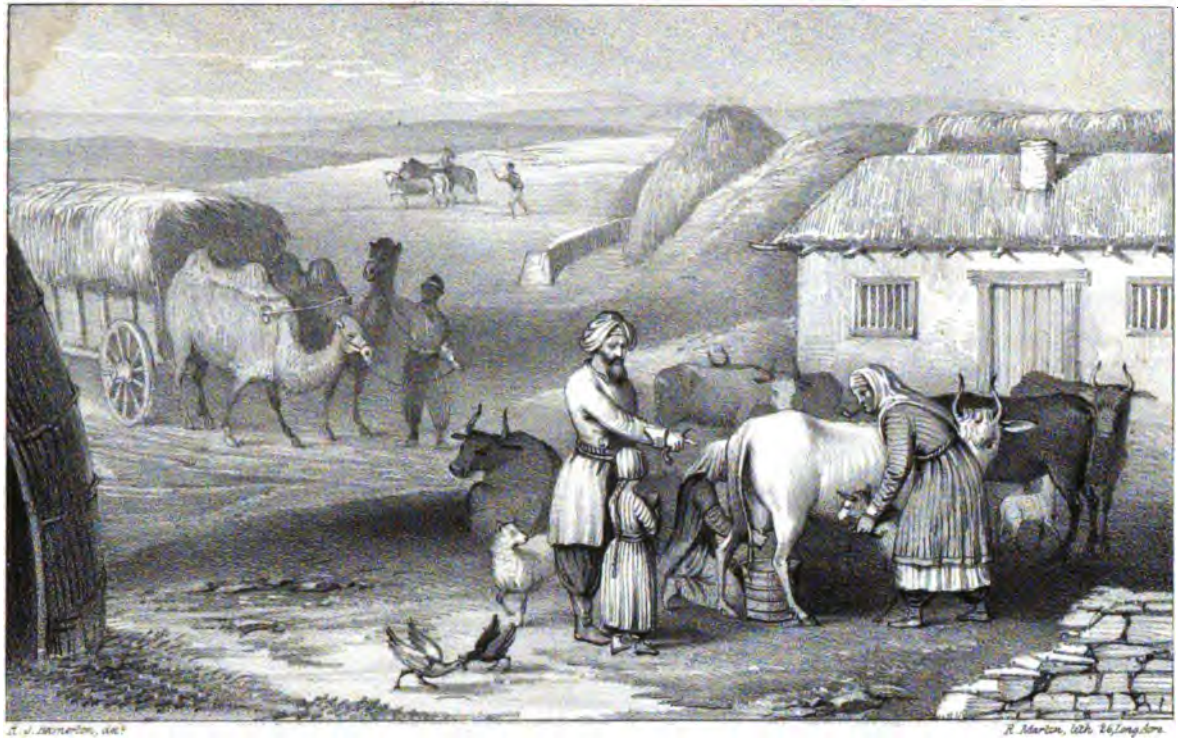
the most correct and unprejudiced of any that exists, and which was written in reply to the misrepresentations of Voltaire, who, it is notorious, preferred Russian gold to truth.

LETTER XXXIII.

BAGTCHE-SERAI AS IT IS—PALACE OF THE KHANS—SINGULAR ARABIC INSCRIPTIONS — WANTON BARBARITY OF THE RUSSIANS—ENVIRONS—GIPSY VILLAGE—INHABITANTS — ANCIENT CHURCH AND CONVENT — VISIT TO THE JEWISH FORTRESS TSCHOUFOUT-KALE—CEMETERY—NOTICE ON THE RELIGION OF THE KARAITE JEWS.

The country declined much in fertility and beauty, on approaching the capital; and we now first entered upon the tiresome uniformity of the steppes of the Crimea. It was very thinly inhabited, and, owing to the entire absence of foliage, we suffered severely from the heat of the sun, which obliged us to rest during the middle of the day at the house of a mourza (nobleman) situated a few miles distant from Bagtche-Serai, where we remained till late in the evening. Having no better employment, I occupied myself in sketching his farmyard, though, truth to say, its chief merit consisted in being highly characteristic of the simple habits of that patriarchal people, the Tartars. Soon

Printed by Henry Hills, Printer to the University of Oxford, 1675.



R. J. Cameron, del.

R. Morton, lith. 26, Long Acre.

FARM YARD OF A TARTAR MOURZA, NEAR BAJTCHI SERAI.

Published by Henry Colburn, Great Marlborough Street. 1839.

after resuming our journey, we commenced descending the valley in which Bagtche-Serai is built; and, notwithstanding it has lost the whole of its magnificence, and not more than one third of the town had escaped the devastations of the Russians, yet enough still remains to render this residence of the Khans of Tartary highly interesting—more especially as it is the only town in the Crimea to which Catherine II. conceded the privilege of being exclusively inhabited by a Tartar population: consequently we here find the national character preserved in its purity.

The situation is highly romantic, being built partly on the banks of the Djourouk-Sou, and partly on the craggy sides of two steep rocky mountains which enclose the valley. The aspect of the buildings, the manners, customs, and costumes of the inhabitants, are strictly Oriental. There are bazaars, mosques, with their minarets, chiosks, and cemeteries, groves of cypresses and black poplars, terraced gardens and vineyards, that appear to hang in air; and, more than proud Stamboul can boast, the eye is everywhere delighted by the aspect of its bubbling fountains and ever-running crystal springs. The streets, in accordance with the custom of the East, are narrow and badly paved; and that

running through the centre of the town is at least a werst in length. Here we see every trade and handicraft, from that of a builder to a pin-maker, exercised in public by the industrious inhabitants: even the usual domestic occupations are carried on in the streets; and this town being the grand depôt for the sale of the fruits, tobacco, flax, and corn of the surrounding country, I often found my passage through the narrow streets completely blocked up by pyramids of some of these articles.

We took up our abode at the palace of the Khans, the most splendid and interesting Tartar building in the Crimea. The Russian government, in making the necessary repairs, had the good taste to preserve its original character, even to the colour of the painting, paper, &c. The furniture, which is not yet entirely completed, is, I understand, also to retain its original forms. Here we have the seraglio, with its gardens and baths, the turreted chiosk, the elegant mosque, the hall of audience, with its latticed gallery, where the favourite dames of the Khan were allowed, unseen, to contemplate the brillant assemblage of nobles, warriors, and senators beneath. In short, here you have everything as it existed in the days of the last Khan, the heroic Selim Guérai, except inhabitants: these

the imagination must supply: for now all is silent — silent as the grave! No footstep echoes through its lofty gilded halls, save that of the keeper; no moullah, from the graceful minaret, calls the faithful to prayer; no fair captive now sighs for liberty within the ramparts of a seraglio prison.

The palace, mosque, and fountains, abound with inscriptions in the Arabian language, the greater part extracted from the Korân; while others inform us of the name and rank of the Khan who erected this particular part of the building, mosque, or fountain. I shall merely trouble you with a translation of one or two, which will amuse you, and, at the same time, give a correct idea of the singular idioms of the language. Not altogether depending upon my own knowledge of Arabic, I was indebted to my companion, M. Courlanszoff, who is an accomplished Arabic scholar, for the following. We shall commence with the inscription over the great gate of the palace:

"This magnificent gate was constructed by the command of the illustrious Sovereign of two seas and two empires, Khadgi Guérai Khan! son of Mengli-Guerai Khan Sultan, son of a Sultan! Anno 953."

Above the principal entrance of the royal mosque of the Khans we have the following:

"Who was Khadji-Selim? The most illustrious of all the Khans of Krim-Tartary. The hero by God's divine power! May the Almighty God, in his supreme kindness, recompense him for the erection of this mosque!"

"Selim Guérai Khan, the son of his love, is a rose! Each rose descended from him sat in his turn on the throne, and was crowned with honours in the seraglio! The rose, now in full bearing, has become the Padischah, the lion of the Crimea, Schlamet Guérai Khan! In this, God hath fulfilled my desire. It is alone to the honour of the Almighty Supreme that this mosque has been completed by Schlamet Guérai Khan! Anno 1153."

From several sentences of the Korân on the windows of the interior of the mosque, I have selected the following:—

"Oh, great Prophet! through thy divine inspiration the whole earth has been enlightened."

The fountains, constructed with great beauty and elegance, have also their separate inscriptions. Over that called Selsebil is placed

"Glory to God most Omnipotent!"

"Rejoice! rejoice! Bagtche-Serai! For the enlightened Krim Guérai Khan, ever benevolent, and solicitous for your welfare, discovered this excellent spring of the purest water: and thus, through his own generous and munificent hand, satisfied the thirst of his children. He is, moreover, ever ready, aided by the inspiration of Almighty God, to render you still greater benefits!"

"If there exist such another fountain in the universe, let it be found! The magnificent towns of Scham and

Bagdad have assuredly seen many glorious things; but they never witnessed so magnificent a fountain!

"Chegi, the author of this inscription, like a man tormented with thirst, traced the lines upon this most beautiful of all fountains, in such a position that they cannot be read except through its crystal stream, which descends through pipes fine as the fingers of a lady's hand. What does this indicate? —an invitation to drink of this pure transparent water, gushing from its unfailing source, and which insures health! Anno 1170."

The architecture of the palace, mosques, and public buildings of the town, is neither imposing nor splendid, being merely interesting from its novelty; but you cannot imagine a prettier picture than the town exhibits when seen from the surrounding heights. The suburbs extend far and wide, intermingled with villas, chiosks, gardens, and water-mills; while the number of mosques, with their domes and minarets, and the forest of small towers, (for every chimney is built in this form,) all contribute their aid to increase the beauty and variety of the general effect.

Bagtche-Serai, which literally means a palace in a garden, still contains thirty-two mosques, besides two or three Tartar universities, and several extensive khans for the accommodation of travellers. If we are to credit the accounts of the inhabitants, while lamenting over the ruins of their once splendid capital, it must,

in truth, have been a most magnificent city before the conquest of the Crimea by the generals of Catherine. In taking possession of the ill-fated town, the wanton barbarity and atrocity of the conquerors almost exceed belief; for, besides pillaging the inhabitants, the very tombs were violated in search of treasures, and whole streets demolished, merely through an insane passion for destruction.

One of the most beautiful country-seats of the khans in the environs, which, it appears, was a perfect miracle of ingenuity and neatness, was entirely erased from the earth. But the most singular chapter in the history, and which Clarke confirms in his Travels through the Crimea, is, that one populous suburb, inhabited by a colony of Greeks, containing upwards of six hundred houses, was totally destroyed, notwithstanding the victims were their own co-religionists.

With such sources of wealth at his command, we cannot feel surprised at the lavish expenditure of Potemkin, nor at the multitude of temporary palaces he erected for the gratification of his august mistress, when she most graciously condescended to visit her newly conquered subjects. It is to be hoped, nay, we will charitably feel assured, that Russia, in her next conquest,

will be actuated by feelings of humanity consonant with the enlightened age in which we live.

The environs afford a variety of agreeable excursions: the most interesting is that to Tchoufout-Kali, of which we speedily availed ourselves. We journeyed through a steep defile, along the banks of the roaring Djourouksou. The road, or at least what by courtesy is so termed, fatigued our horses excessively, owing to its being composed of round slippery stones, worn smooth by the action of the waters; and the gigantic rocks, without the slightest foliage, by attracting the sun, rendered the heat of the atmosphere almost insupportable.

After advancing some little way through the defile, our attention was attracted by a tremendous uproar; and, on turning a curve of the road, we came at once upon a gipsy village, presenting a scene not easily paralleled. Bears were bellowing, monkeys and children screaming, dogs barking, drums beating, pipers playing, women scolding, men fighting, and smiths and tinkers hammering,—altogether forming a *charivari* which, fortunately for men's ears, does not often assail them. Nor was the appearance of these people less remarkable than their noise: the majority of the children were entirely naked; and their parents nearly so, having no covering but a

pair of wide trousers; those of the women differing but little in form and colour from those of the men. The whole, whether basking in the sun or at work, were incessantly smoking from little short pipes made of boxwood. In short, they exhibited a picture of human degradation and misery, such as I have not often witnessed, even among the most savage tribes. Their dwellings consisted merely of scattered tents, and holes burrowed into the sides of the soft limestone rocks that towered above them. Their habits appeared filthy in the extreme; for, besides the stench arising from the numerous animals with which they lived in common, the immense volumes of tobacco smoke, and the smell of onions and garlic, formed an odour altogether so unsavoury, that we heartily wished ourselves out of its vicinity.

On hearing the sound of our horses, the whole motley multitude started on their legs, and rushed towards us; when pipers, drummers, fiddlers, dancing-dogs and bears, tumbling-monkeys and naked children, young fortune-tellers and old witches, all performed before us in their respective characters. A handful of kopecks, for which they most reverently kissed the hem of our garments and wished us a happy journey, delivered us from their importunities.

In the midst of all this wretchedness, I could not help remarking the well-formed proportions of the men — their fiery eyes and animated countenances. Nor were the fine features of the women, the large, full, dark eye, and jet black hair hanging down in natural curls on their shoulders, less admirable; and although, from continual exposure to the weather, they were nearly as dark as Indians, yet those still young were really beautiful. But this distinction does not long characterise the women of the East, particularly this migratory people; for those more advanced in life were the veriest personification of what you might imagine witches to be, —haggard, withered, and wrinkled.

Soon after leaving this tumultuous rabble, we perceived the monastery of the Assumption, which appeared suspended, like an eagle's eyry, on the side of a range of stupendous rocks. This singular effort of human labour is supposed to have been the work of the persecuted Christians of the early ages. Here we found the cells of the monks, corridors, refectory, and church, hewn out of the solid rock, and supported by massive columns, altogether forming a fortress perfectly impregnable; for the only entrance is up a flight of steps cut in the rock to a drawbridge, which being once re-

moved, the inmates are perfectly secure from intrusion. The church has been recently repaired by the Russian government; and, after being closed for centuries, divine service is now regularly performed in it.

The subterranean convent and church, however interesting, are quite equalled, in the curious nature of their position, by that of the fortress Tchoufout-Kali, about a mile higher up the defile. This very remarkable fortress is built upon the summit of an isolated peak of the same range of rocks; and so steep and precipitous is the approach, that, in order to reach it, we were obliged to climb rather than walk. Being completely surrounded by high massive walls, in great part hewn out of the rock, and having only two gates, which form the sole communication with the exterior, the inhabitants, if resolute to defend themselves, might, with perfect security, bid defiance to any attack from without.

We have no authentic record by what people, or at what epoch, this impregnable fortress was originally constructed. Some antiquaries, grounding their opinions upon vain traditions, assert that it was founded by a congregation of the persecuted Arians, who, we know, fled to rocks and caverns; while others, upon no better

authority, assign the honour to the Cimmerians, the aborigines of the Crimea, who, on the invasion of their country by the Scythians, took refuge in the mountains and inaccessible rocks. But for what reason it received the Tartar appellation, Tchoufout-Kali, (Fortress of the Miscreants,) we are no better informed than as to its origin.

This little fortress town contains about three hundred houses; the streets are exceedingly narrow; the pavement is the solid rock, and the whole kept remarkably clean by the inhabitants, who are, without exception, Jews of the Karaite sect. Their moral character is unimpeachable, their honesty proverbial; and so highly esteemed are they by the government, that they enjoy more extensive privileges than any other of the tribe inhabiting the Crimea.

On entering the town we were immediately conducted to the house of Rebi Youssouf, the rabbin or principal chief of the whole of the Israelitish Karaite sect in these countries. This venerable elder of the church received us in the most friendly manner, and not only regaled us hospitably, but entertained us with his animated and intelligent conversation. After our repast, he accompanied us to the synagogue, an antique building, differing in no respect from the generality of Jewish places of public worship. Here

we were shown a manuscript of the Old Testament, commencing with the first book of Joshua, and so very ancient that no tradition exists among the people of its date.

From thence we passed into an adjoining garden, solely appropriated to the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, and continued our promenade through the town, to a steep flight of steps leading down to what is termed the Valley of Jehosaphat, situate in a chasm of the rocks. This is the cemetery of the sect, resembling a beautiful grove, shaded by the dark foliage of a thousand trees, forming a striking contrast to the white marble tombs, and gloomy beetling rocks that seem to threaten destruction at every step. Here several tombs were pointed out to me, bearing inscriptions in the Hebrew language so far back as the fourteenth century; thus proving the present tribe to have been in possession of the fortress at least since that period. The trees also exhibit an appearance of great age, and are held so sacred, and so highly valued by the Karaites, that their former masters, the khans of Krim-Tartary, when in want of funds, had only to threaten their extirpation, in order to extort heavy contributions from the pious inhabitants.

You cannot imagine anything more interest-

ing or affecting than the cemeteries of the East; for, whether appropriated as the last resting-place to Christian, Jew, or Moslem, they are equally the delightful promenade, the peaceful retreat, shaded by the weeping ash, the tall cypress, and the wide-spreading plane. I never yet visited one without witnessing some proof of the reverential piety with which these people regard the dead. Here, the mourner was sorrowing over the loss of a dear relative; there, adorning the tomb with flowers, or some other memorial of affection. We cannot, however, wonder that the silence of the cemetery is so frequently sought by the inhabitants of these countries, when we remember the belief is general, that the souls of the departed hover round their earthly tenements, and also about those whom they have loved while living. Hence, when the Oriental, depressed by misfortune, would seek consolation, or, elevated by prosperity, desires sympathy, he repairs to the field of the dead, and communes with the spirits of his forefathers.

A few additional details of the manners and religion of the Karaite Jews, a people so highly esteemed for their moral qualities, and differing so widely from the character of the Talmudists, may perhaps be interesting. It appears that the name of the sect is derived from Karai—the

Written Word; their creed being founded exclusively on the text of the Old Testament as it stands, pure, simple, and uncommentated; rejecting *in toto* the traditions and interpretations of the rabbins, and also those established by the authority of the Talmud. From this latter they also differ in various other particulars; for instance, in their degrees of consanguinity, mode of circumcision, diet, and marriage—permitting polygamy, which, however, through the influence of custom, is not practised. They trace their origin, as a sect, to the dispersion of the Israelites at the Babylonish captivity; and they attribute to their long residence among the heathen, and to the scarcity of written copies of the law, the introduction of a variety of errors and fallacious traditions. Hence, on the re-establishment of the tribes, finding the scriptures loaded with comments, a large portion refused to receive them. These called themselves Karaites, and in after days were dreadfully persecuted by their brethren.

The Karaites also assert that our Saviour was a member of their community, and that he entertained the same opinion as themselves with respect to the interpolations of the rabbins: in support of which belief, they adduce his repeated and violent denunciations against the rabbinical

interpretations, and most positively deny that any member of their sect was, in the slightest degree, implicated in the crucifixion. These people likewise believe that they possess the only authentic copy of the Old Testament extant. Like the Quakers, they provide amply for their own poor; are principally engaged in commerce, and generally wealthy. We also frequently meet with them, in Poland and Gallicia, where they are highly esteemed, and enjoy the same privileges as the Christians. Perhaps no religious sect educate their children with greater care, the whole, without exception, being publicly instructed in the synagogue. From this solicitude also originates the separation of the books of the Old Testament; the Pentateuch being reserved as a guide of faith and morals for the young; while the perusal of the remainder is deferred till time shall have matured the intellect. This division they trace to the usages of their forefathers from time immemorial. In their dress they resemble the Armenians, wearing long flowing robes, and on the head a high fur cap.

LETTER XXXIV.

VALLEY OF BAIDAR—SCENERY—HOSPITALITY OF THE TARTARS—PASSAGE OF THE MERDVEN—TERRIFIC DESCENT—SINGULAR CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROAD—ARRIVAL AT ALOUPKA.

We took a different route on our return to Aloupka, when we passed through the charming valley of Baidar; and no part of the Crimea, not even the beautiful vales on the south coast, has been so highly extolled as this valley. It has been described by one as "far surpassing Johnson's Abyssinian vale;" by another, as "a terrestrial paradise;" by a third, as the "Tauric Arcadia;" and even Lady Craven has given it the high-sounding title of the "Crimean Tempe!"

As I do not wish to disappoint future travellers, I assure you, without the slightest intention to underrate the beauties of the valley of Baidar, that we have a hundred quite as delightful in Great Britain, the only difference being in climate and productions; and if we have not a cloudless sky, we are exempt from the burning heat of the sun; if we cannot boast of the fig,

the pomegranate, and the olive, our trees are at least far more splendid, and our verdure far more refreshing; with the advantage of being everywhere watered by a noble river—always the principal ornament of, and absolutely necessary to complete, a picturesque landscape.

The valley of Baidar is deficient in this charm of rural scenery; for it has neither lake nor waterfall, and its tiny stream barely deserves the appellation of rivulet. Neither are its mountains sufficiently lofty to be called sublime, nor its rocks grotesque enough to amuse the traveller. Still, notwithstanding all this, it is a very pretty valley; and a poet might sing sonnets in its praise, without resorting to invention. Being about fifteen wersts (ten miles) in length, and six or seven in breadth, and surrounded by romantic hills, the eye can roam at once over all its beauties, and they are not a few.

Besides, as these Arcadian fields are protected from the cold wintry winds, and irrigated by numerous bubbling springs, the productions of more southern climes attain the highest perfection. Indeed, everywhere, while wandering through this lovely valley, we are delighted with its rich orchards and vineyards, green fields, rural pastures, and neat Tartar villages. Here

I saw some of the finest oaks and most luxuriant corn in the Crimea; and among all the other valleys I beheld, none equalled it in fertility. There is also a degree of independence in the bearing of the Tartar inhabitants which is always agreeable to an Englishman, and they appeared to command all the comforts of life.

We passed the night at one of the pretty villages of this valley, called Kalendia, where we found, as usual among this primitive people, a kind reception, smiling faces, and, as far as their slender means would permit, good cheer. One of the most beautiful traits that distinguish the character of the Tartars, is their hospitality; no traveller, however unknown, whether Jew, Turk, or Christian, ever applied, even in the poorest hamlet, without being certain of having his wants supplied.

In every town and village of the Crimea, a khan, or species of inn, has been established, from time immemorial, called the Oda, expressly set apart for the reception of the stranger, where he is supplied with a divan for a couch, fire, and refreshment, free of expense. It is generally the moullah (priest) who takes upon himself the benevolent office of entertaining the stranger; but though, as I before observed, remuneration is never demanded, it is expected, out of courtesy,

that the wealthy will present a small gratuity, which is always thankfully received.

It may be necessary to mention, for the information of travellers in the Crimea, a country nearly destitute of inns, that should a stranger arrive in a town or village unprovided with the necessary travelling firman, &c., and may require redress for any grievance, or experience difficulty in procuring a relay of horses, or accommodation for the night, he has only to apply to the proper officer, whose duty it is to see his requisitions complied with, and he will be instantly attended to. In a village where the population does not exceed a hundred, this officer is called the On-Bachi; and when above that number, the Uz-Bachi.

To avoid the intense heat of the day, we recommenced our journey the next morning, long before the dawn, when we crossed, on our way to the south coast, the famous passage of the Merdven, the *Pont-Diable* of the Crimea. The road, or bridle-path, is carried partly through a deep ravine, and partly up the perpendicular side of a rock of terrific elevation: the difficulty of constructing such a miraculous road you will easily conceive, when I tell you, that if we take only one length of it,—for instance, eight hundred paces,—we shall find that it contains

forty zig-zag stories, one above the other. Perhaps the annexed sketch will convey to you a more correct idea of this very remarkable passage than even a lengthened description. There

is no tradition extant, at what epoch or by what people this work was constructed: it is, however, conjectured, that nothing but the commercial spirit of ancient Greece could have surmounted the difficulty. We may compare it, without exaggeration, to a voyage in the air; and yet such is the surefootedness of the Tartar

horses, that they perform it with the utmost facility.

I have frequently traversed dangerous passes in other mountainous countries; but none so remarkable, precipitous, or bold. The view also from the summit is strikingly grand, comprehending the Euxine, and a great part of the southern coast; and I can with confidence assure the traveller who may be inclined to perform this pilgrimage, that he will not be disappointed.

Having surmounted our difficulty, and supported, as best we might, the rays of a burning sun, we descended a similar neck-breaking pass, till we came to the village of Koutschouk-Koi, hanging upon the precipitous sides of a rock, where, having taken some refreshment, we proceeded by a narrow bridle-path among the rocks; and, being at a considerable elevation above the sea, enjoyed at every turn a new landscape of some of the boldest and most picturesque scenery in the Crimea, till we arrived at Aloupka, only just in time for a grand entertainment given by Count Worrenzow, for the first time, in the noble *salle-à-manger* of his new château at Aloupka.

LETTER XXXV.

CHATEAU OF COUNT WORRENZOW AT ALOUPKA—ITS ARCHITECTURE—PLEASURE-GROUNDS—MARSANDA — ITS VILLA —SITUATION AND PARK—VILLAS OF THE RUSSIAN NOBILITY—THE EMPEROR'S PARK AT ORIANDA—THE CRIMEA UNFAVOURABLE TO THE GROWTH OF FOREST TREES—FETE CHAMPETRE GIVEN BY GENERAL COUNT DE WITT.

I SHALL now proceed to give you a short description of the south coast of the Crimea. Its picturesque beauties have been already so often sung by poets and travellers, that any praise of mine would be superfluous. Having, in a former letter, given you an account of its most striking beauties, I shall merely at present confine myself to a few criticisms on the grounds and villas of the Russian noblemen that adorn it.

We shall therefore commence with Aloupka, where the governor-general, Count Worrenzow, is building a château, which, if completed according to the original plan, will be undoubtedly the most splendid baronial castle in the Russian empire; as that portion already finished cannot be surpassed for the beauty, solidity, and pure taste

of the architecture. The noble proprietor is extremely fortunate in having, in the immediate vicinity, the most excellent stone for building, of a beautiful colour, and as hard as granite, found in the bosom of a spent volcano. But, however we may admire the fine taste and beauty of the architecture of this really magnificent edifice, we cannot extend it to the judgment which selected this site for its erection, which, I understand, was chosen by a French architect. Fancy a stupendous rock, towering to the heavens, nearly destitute of foliage to its summit, with just as much space of fertile ground between it and the sea as would suffice an English farmer for a turnip-garden. To be sure, there are many pretty little things to admire, in the shape of caverns, defiles, a spent volcano, grotesque rocks enclosing petty paddocks blooming with flowers, tiny cascades, bubbling fountains, artificial ponds, &c., but all so diminutive, and contracted into so small a compass, that, when compared with the stupendous castle they are intended to adorn, they appear like babies' toys, the very work of children. Whether we sit in the drawing-room, wander through its lofty hall, or ascend its turreted battlements, we have no other view than the sea on one side, which, from constant repetition, becomes monotonous; and, on the other,

the cold, barren sides of the gigantic Ai-Petri, together with a few vineyards, and a Tartar village with its little mosques ;—by-the-bye, the most picturesque feature in the landscape.

Such a castle, frowning down in its lofty grandeur, would have been most characteristic of bygone days, when force was law ; it would then have been admirably adapted for levying contributions on the passing traveller, or the mariner who, from distress of weather, or temerity, might approach the lordly coast ; but, in the present enlightened age of good government, the dwellings of the great and wealthy are connected in our ideas with more peaceable accompaniments. We expect to see the green, undulating lawn adorned with the wide-spreading foliage of its noble trees ; the extensive, well laid out park animated with the gentle fawn and the graceful deer ; with here and there, in the far distance, a glimpse of agricultural fields, clothed in their many tints and shades, intermingled with the bright silver of the meandering stream, and meadows and pastures chequered with their numerous flocks and herds. These pastoral and truly picturesque scenes, which, from their variety, impart additional beauty to the sublime grandeur of mountain, rock, and glen, Count W. can never enjoy at his proud château of Aloupka ;

for what wealth, what power, what art, can remove mountains, or change the flinty rock into fertile fields?

The traveller who rambles over the south coast of the Crimea, and visits Marsanda, also the property of the count, and only distant from Aloupka about eleven miles, will be surprised, while admiring the manifold beauties of the scenery, that it was not chosen for the erection of his château. Here we have an extensive estate, abounding with some of the most sublime and lovely scenery in the Crimea. A stupendous chain of rocks, in all their grotesque forms, clothed to the summit with the finest foliage, protects this highly favoured spot from violent winds, particularly the cold, chilling blasts of the north. Before us lies extended the wide, expansive Euxine, with its many bays, lofty precipices and promontories; while, to the right and left, the eye wanders with delight through the fertile valley of Yalta, with its rolling stream, Tartar villages, noble bay, and pretty town. Moreover, this fine estate has all the advantage of having in great part a fertile soil, watered by several mountain torrents;—here rushing through a deep gorge, there meandering through a tiny valley, then dashing downwards from the dizzy heights of a craggy rock, with the loud roar of a

waterfall. Nor are these the only attractions of Marsanda; for, besides extensive corn-fields, pastures, and vineyards, there are virgin forests, composed of the wild vine, the fig, the pomegranate, the oak, the beech, and chesnut, together with innumerable parasitical plants, forming graceful garlands from tree to tree, all planted by the hand of Nature, and admirably harmonising their various tints and shades. How often, while riding over this beautiful and picturesque estate, I vainly wished to be possessed of the power of a magician! Then would I have removed the neat little villa of Marsanda to Aloupka, so adapted to adorn its diminutive pleasure-grounds, and placed its magnificent château here. Count W. then might proudly say he possessed the finest château, and the most picturesesque park and grounds, in the empire.

The south coast of the Crimea, as I before remarked, abounds with the country seats of some of the highest aristocratical families in the Russian empire; but the style of the architecture, and laying out of the grounds, remind an Englishman so forcibly of the cockney villas, with their flower-gardens, in the environs of London, that he is almost led to believe the noble proprietors must have taken them for their models. A flower-garden is undoubtedly

a very pretty ornament; but while we sit in the rich saloon of a prince, with the eternal prospect from its windows of beds of bachelors' buttons, sweetwilliam, orange-flowers, and daffadowndillies, their poverty and insignificance, at least, does not correspond with the rank and wealth of the proprietor, nor say much for his taste in landscape gardening. I must not also forget the little groves of cypresses, a most favourite tree with the Russians, and no doubt interesting to all northern people, connected as it is with the description of the gardens and cemeteries of the Orientals; yet, when planted for the purpose of ornamenting a pleasure-ground, in long, straight rows, their dark shades, to say nothing of their most unpicturesque form, throw a dismal gloom over the whole landscape, and never failed to remind me of a Turkish cemetery, and that man is born to die.

To this sweeping censure there are, however, several redeeming exceptions: for, in addition to that of Count Worrenzow, there is the gentlemanly villa and fine park belonging to the Count de Witt, together with the elegant mansion and well laid-out grounds of General Leon Nariskin: but, above all, the extensive and beautiful park of the emperor at Orianda everywhere indicates the tasteful hand of the landscape gardener, does

our countryman Mr. Ross every credit, and cannot be too highly eulogised. Here I saw, perhaps, the finest *Arbutus Andrachne* existing, measuring not less than ten feet in circumference. Mr. Ross considers it a different species from any we have in England. The juniper is of equally gigantic proportions, and everywhere grows wild, and generally out of a cleft of the rocks. Notwithstanding this, the Crimea is by no means famous for the growth of trees: the oak, and every other species of forest-trees, are far inferior in size and beauty to our own in England; and in the lowlands, called the Steppe, they altogether perish, after a brief existence of a year or two. The vine is very much cultivated on the south coast; and though it has the advantage of a fine situation and good climate, yet the produce is not commensurate with the labour of the vine-dresser; nor does the wine bear a high character, either for flavour or strength. The various garden fruits are excellent of their kind, particularly the apples, which are so highly esteemed as to form an article of commerce even to Moscow.

Immediately on my return from Bagtche-Serai, I was invited by the Count de Witt to a *fête champêtre* at his country-seat, Orianda; and as it was intended to be very grand, with the

accompaniments of illumination and fireworks, I may perhaps be allowed this time, from the novelty of the entertainments, to trespass upon your patience, and give a detailed description.

In every country, music, dancing, and illuminations are most attractive. On this occasion we had an immense assemblage, and I wondered not a little where they had all come from. Besides the courtly dames elegantly attired, and their high-born cavaliers decked with the jewelled order, there were a number of pretty girls, in their light muslin dresses, and young aides-de-camp and officers of every rank in the army and navy, which always gives a cheerful tone to society. When the majority of the guests were arrived, and just as the shades of night had completely replaced the light of day, the whole of our party sallied forth to the park, escorted by a number of domestics bearing torches. After passing through a deep, gloomy defile, we all at once emerged into a most romantic little paddock, completely encircled by a chain of rocks, of stupendous elevation, the whole brilliantly illuminated with myriads of variegated lamps; at the same time, thousands of rockets, in all their bizarre forms, were flying about in every direction,—now lighting up the vast Euxine, and then the dizzy heights above.

In addition to this, the count's yacht, lying in the bay, was hung with lamps, every moment changing from one fanciful device to another; while the loud roar of cannon echoed and re-echoed, far and wide, through the glens and rocks. Pretty tents of the most graceful forms were erected for taking refreshment; during which the most exquisite music sweetly sounded through the air, (the performers completely concealed from view,) giving to the whole a supernatural cast, as if created by enchantment.

From hence we passed into another of these little romantic spots; then through grottoes and caverns, all similarly illuminated, with tents and tables laid out with every description of light refreshment; and, be it remembered, all this in a climate with a sky perfectly cloudless. After remaining in this fairy land till about midnight, we returned to the count's villa, where dancing and card-playing was carried on till Aurora summoned us to our homes.

Adieu!

END OF VOL. I.

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